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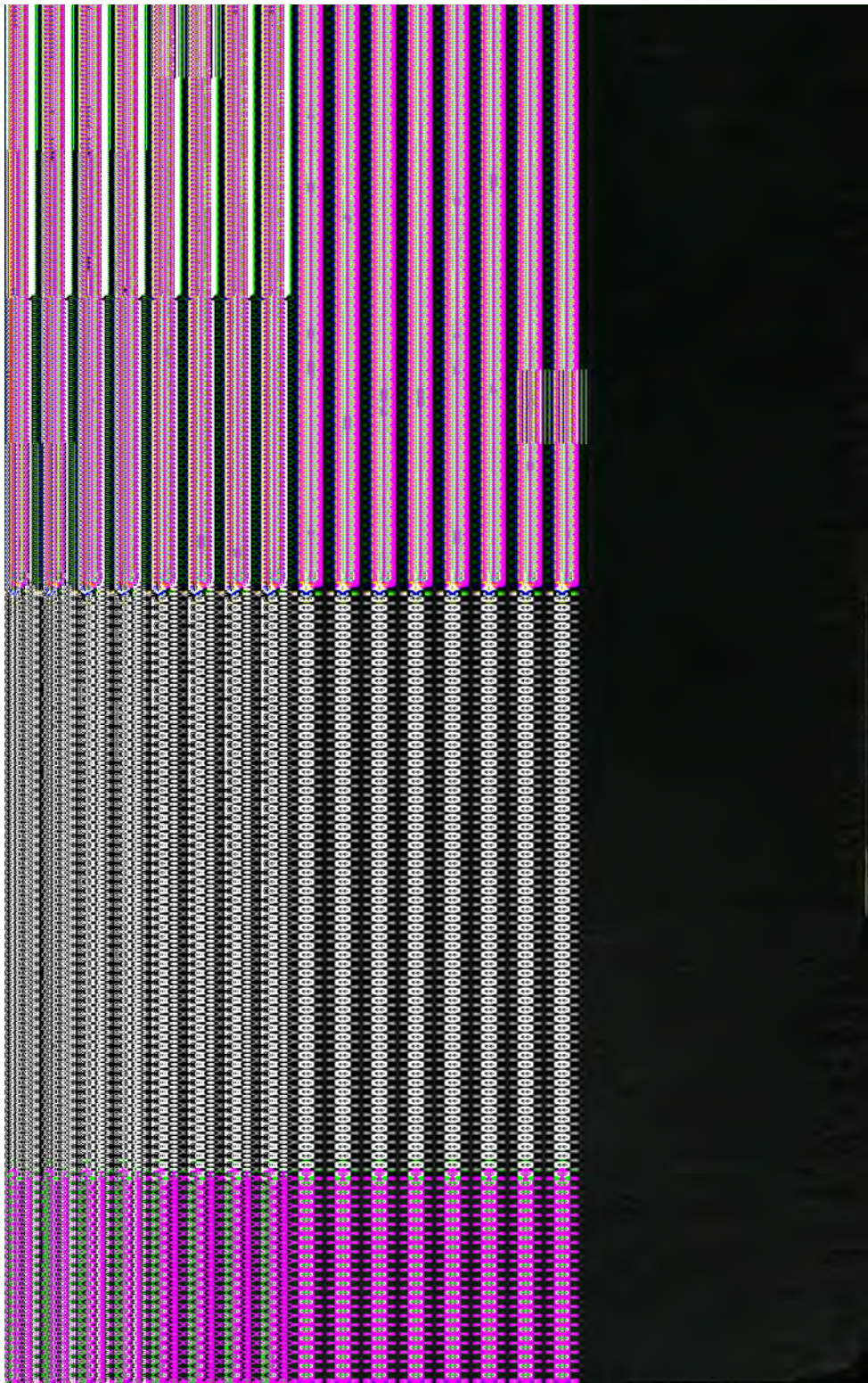
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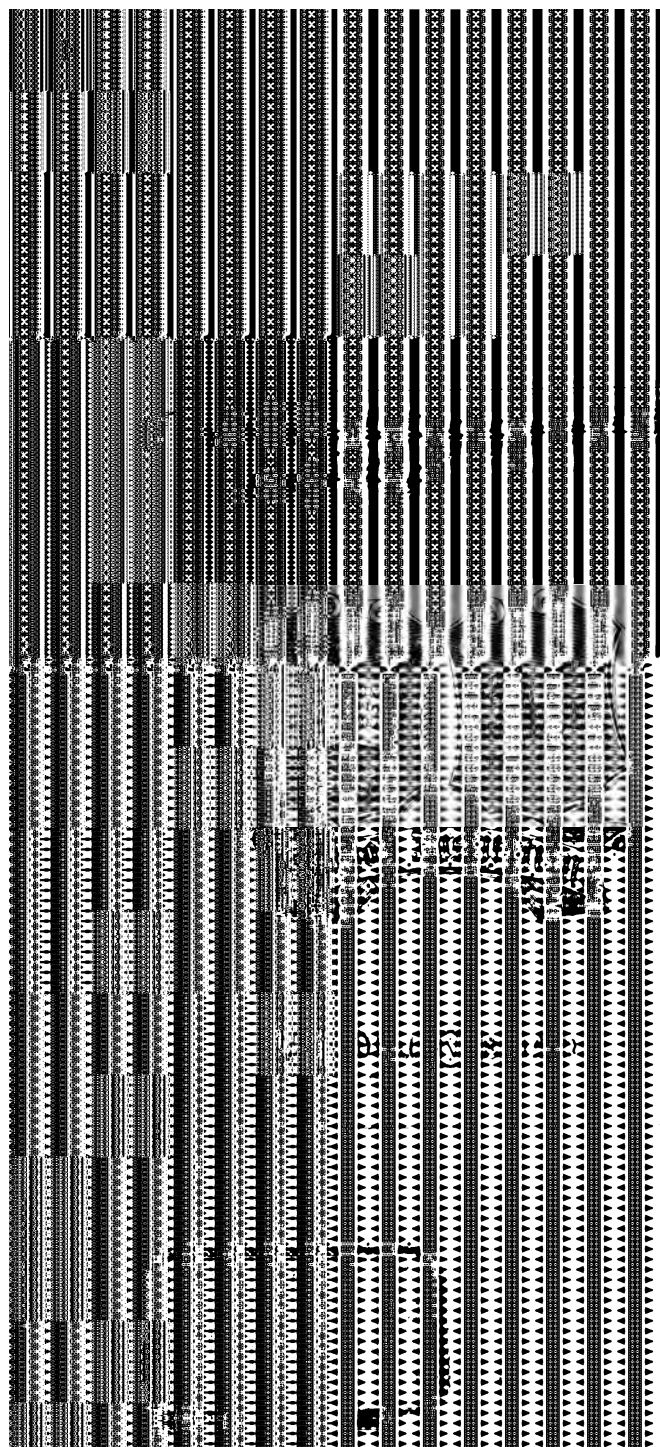
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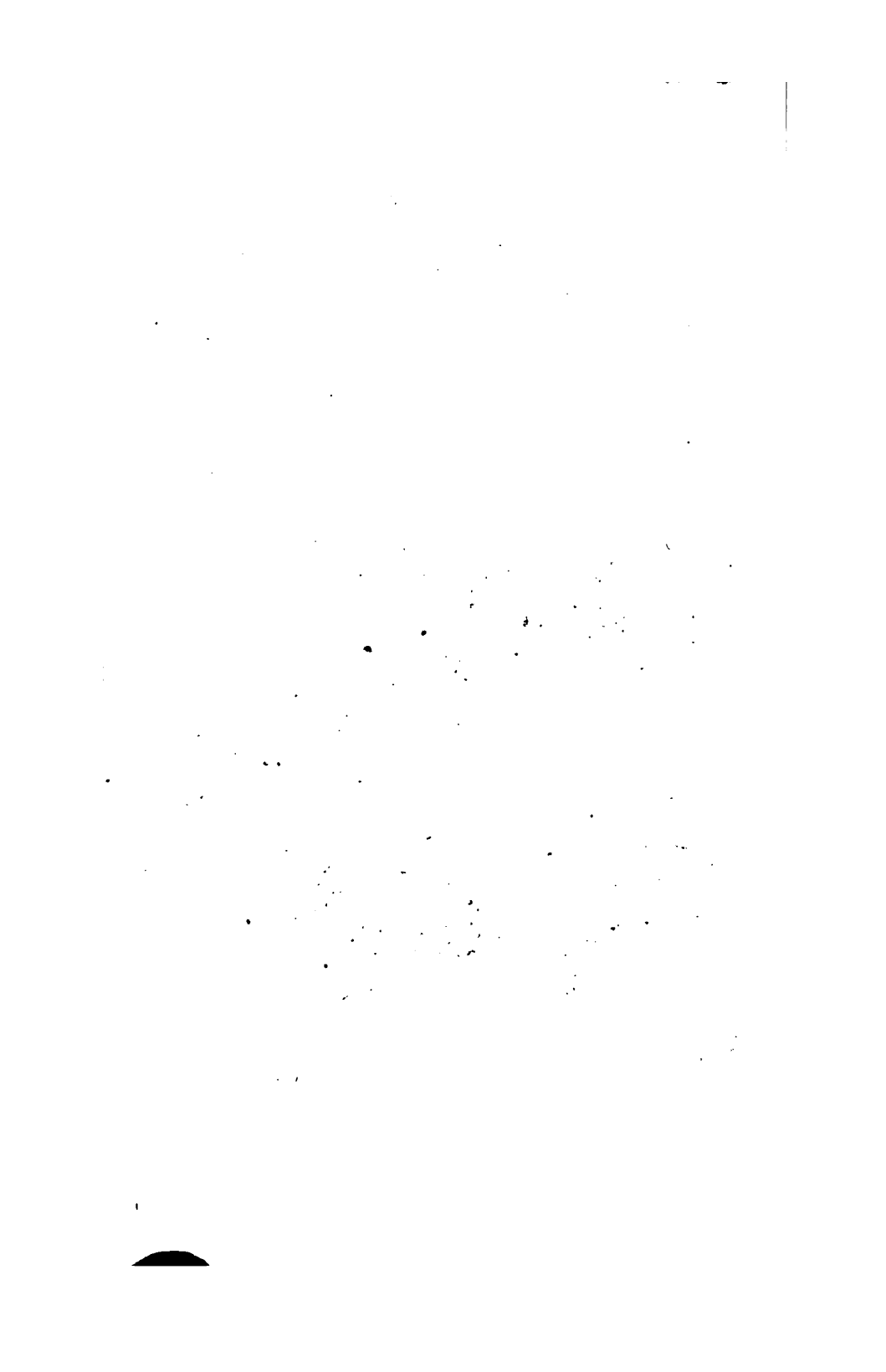


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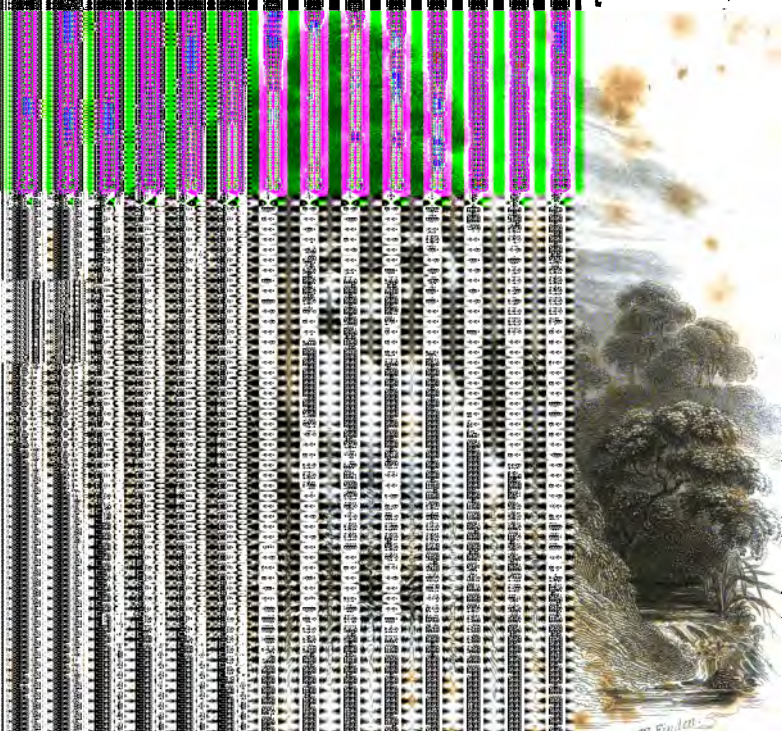
THE
ITALIAN NOVELISTS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



John Lubbock Esq.



Painted by W. Forster

Court, Ludgate Street.



THE
ITALIAN NOVELISTS:

SELECTED FROM THE
MOST APPROVED AUTHORS

IN
THAT LANGUAGE;

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD DOWN TO THE CLOSE OF
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY:

ARRANGED
IN AN HISTORICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL SERIES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE
ORIGINAL ITALIAN.

ACCOMPANIED WITH
NOTES, CRITICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL.

By THOMAS ROSCOE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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Fobels of Ortensio Lando.

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B

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1917

1

ORTENSIO LANDO.*

THIS writer, who flourished about the middle of the sixteenth century, was by birth a Milanese, and traced his family origin to Piacenza. He devoted himself to the medical profession, in which he may probably have imbibed those heretical opinions which led to his subsequent banishment, many of the physicians of that period being distinguished for the freedom of their religious sentiments. It is said by some of the authorities that Lando was an Augustine friar, but the fact that he was persecuted for the heretical tendency of his opinions, militates against this assertion, which seems to be unsupported by any kind of evidence. It is certain that he abandoned his native country in dread of an impending martyrdom, and embraced the party of Luther on retiring into Germany, where he ended his days in poverty and distress. We may thus account for the various theological discussions which we find mingled with his writings, both in the Italian and Latin languages.

* *Varii Componimenti di M. Ortensio Lando*: Venice, 1552, 8vo.

His novels, to the number of fourteen, appeared with a collection of his *Varii Componimenti*, at Venice, in 1552. According to the author's own statement, they were composed in imitation of the great Boccaccio, however far they may be from reaching the excellence of their model. He may nevertheless be allowed to take his rank among the best novelists of that day; who were as anxious to persuade their readers of their resemblance to Boccaccio, as their predecessors had been to testify the truth and originality of their stories.*

Lando is considered remarkable for the easy and graceful flow of his language, in which he has scarcely any competitor. His narratives, likewise, in point of incident, are in general very lively and pleasing. Like Grazzini, whom he most resembled, he was of a very whimsical disposition, and is said to have been so strongly addicted to the sin of scandal, that, in default of other subjects, he was unable even to spare himself; having drawn so unfavourable a portrait of his own character, as to leave his orthodox enemies very little to say against him. The thirteenth story of Lando, in the opinion of Mr. Dunlop, possesses intrinsic excellence, and forms one of the following selection.

* History of Fiction, vol. ii. p. 441.

ORTENSIO LANDO.

NOVELLA IV.

MANFRED, King of Navarre, was one of the most cruel and sanguinary princes of his age. Altogether unworthy of the name of king, there was nothing sacred in his eyes, nothing that seemed to restrain him in his ferocious career. He was never known to evince marks of pleasure, except where rapine and violation attended upon his steps. This unnatural disposition he more particularly indulged towards those who had most essentially served him; until, unable longer to endure the extreme severity of his yoke, his own nobles rose up in arms, and excited the people to revolt. The signal being once given, they rushed forward in crowds towards the palace, in order to satiate their vengeance upon the spot. Incapable of making head against the wrath of his exasperated people, the sense of his past crimes suddenly smote upon the soul of the monarch, and he stood, for a moment, the image of anguish and despair: but the tidings of fate bursting louder and louder on his ear,

he recollected a secret staircase which led to the back of his palace, and snatching up the young prince his son, by Queen Altília, a daughter of the King of Spain, he attempted to escape from the palace, already enveloped in flames. His hair, his royal mantle, and even his features, were scorched with the excessive heat; but the child, whom he had carefully wrapped in a flannel gown, escaped unhurt. In this state he succeeded, in a quarter where the assailants were but few, in making his way beyond the precincts of the palace, and at length, after infinite risks, he passed the frontiers of his own dominions. With slow and painful footsteps, he then proceeded, begging alms by the way, from country to country, having exchanged his royal garments for a pauper's dress, and wishing, yet afraid, to die. His exasperated subjects meeting neither with him nor his son, whose name was Vitrio, concluded that they had both perished in the flames, and immediately proceeded to elevate to the throne his brother Aldobrandino, a wise and temperate prince, who proved himself worthy of their choice.

Manfred, in the mean while, continued to traverse various regions, with his little boy, who sometimes walked at his side, and sometimes was borne in his father's arms, encountering unnumbered perils and

deprivations, and stung with remorse at the recollection of his past enormities. Drooping at length under the weight of years and infirmities, he arrived at Sienna, where he applied for admission into the public hospital, and was charitably received. Finding himself here approaching the termination of his days, while his poor son, Vitrio, stood weeping by his side, he entreated the governor, and some other gentlemen of the city, to visit him before he expired. Several persons having complied with this request, King Manfred, turning towards the boy with tears in his eyes, addressed him as follows:—"Behold, my child, the well merited punishment of cruelty and sin! Behold me, a lone and banished man, perishing of want, as you have frequently witnessed, during our long and painful pilgrimage. It is my wish before I leave you, to reveal the history of our birth and name, for you are nobly born, and some time you may, perhaps, profit by a knowledge of the truth. My name is Manfred, the tyrant of Navarre, and you are the offspring of my queen Altilia, daughter of King Severus of Spain. I saved you, at imminent risk, from the flames kindled by an indignant people, in order to envelope us in the ruins of our own palace. Believing us to have perished in the flames, my brother was elevated to the vacant

throne, and I became a wretched exile, suffering under the incessant attacks of remorse, poverty, and despair. But I have to beseech you, my son, that you will obey me in what I am about to request ;— that you will ever bear in mind those precepts of your ancestors, which I myself so unhappily violated or neglected ; and thus avoid the horror of being surrounded by the threatening arms of an injured and exasperated people. Imprint, then, the four following maxims upon your memory. In the first place, never abandon the old path for the new ; secondly, never attach yourself to a woman whom you may not lawfully call your own : thirdly, marry no woman till you have first seen her, and found her nobility of birth to be worthy of sharing your high rank ; fourthly, never strike your enemy, until you have first thrice drawn your sword, and thrice sheathed it in the scabbard." Then, having taken a tender leave of his son, and, fully sensible of his late crimes, received the sacrament, and reconciled himself to our holy church, he turned himself upon his side and expired. During this scene, the surrounding spectators were bathed in tears ; but their grief was lost in the deeper lamentations of the unhappy youth, who wept over his father, as the first and the last friend he ever had in the world. " Whither shall I

go? Where shall I seek a refuge now?" he cried, "my dear, dear father, thou hast left me without hope or stay!" But some gentlemen of Sienna, tearing him almost forcibly from the body, caused the deceased to be honorably interred at the public expense; nor could his son have received more ample proofs of regard, had he been the immediate successor to a throne. For the noblest Siennese families invited him to their houses, and in a short time they selected a deputation of gentlemen to accompany him into the kingdom of his grandfather, and to bear witness to the decease of Manfred, and the manner in which he had eluded the vigilance of his people. He was welcomed by King Severus with the utmost kindness, the Siennese ambassadors receiving also public testimony of his approbation of their conduct, in a variety of rich donations to grace their return.

Pleased with the young prince's conduct and disposition, the king brought him up at his own court; and when he had reached his sixteenth year, he bestowed upon him the hand of one of the most beautiful princesses of Portugal, celebrating his espousals with the bright Cillenia in the most pompous and magnificent manner. Not very long after this, Vitrio was seized with a violent fever, and in order to

facilitate his recovery, he made a pious vow to visit as a pilgrim the holy cities of Rome and Jerusalem. On his convalescence, therefore, he entreated the king to permit him to fulfil his vow, which he doubted not had restored him so far to health. This, with some difficulty, being at length granted by the king, who tenderly loved him, the invalid set out, loaded with rich presents, and attended by a noble train. Having visited Rome, and made the due offerings at the holy shrine, he departed for Ancona, where he hired a noble galley to convey him to the port of Baruti, situated not very far from Jerusalem. He was borne by prosperous breezes until he arrived near the isle of Cyprus, when a sudden tempest arising, the vessel was driven off the coast of Syria, and being dashed to pieces on the rocks, about twenty of the passengers were saved and captured by the neighbouring inhabitants. But Vitrio, with several of his companions, had first escaped to shore, and continued his flight during the whole of that day along the coast, without any nutriment, until they were overpowered by fatigue. The following morning, meeting with some wild berries, they recruited their exhausted strength, and were fortunate enough, after long toil, to reach a spring of water near the shore ; but so dark and turbid as to be extremely nauseous

to the taste. Vitrio then threw himself, overwhelmed with sorrow and weariness, upon the sands, desirous of obtaining some repose. On seeing this, two of his attendants began to lament their unhappy fate, and, reproaching him with want of feeling in having paid no attention to them, they resolved to consult their own safety, and to abandon him as he lay. Awakening soon after, he arose and called them by their names, and, when those who remained faithful to him came forward, he besought them not to desert him; for he had dreamed, that, while he slept, his companions had departed. Under the impression that they had all conspired to betray him, he now besought them most tenderly as friends and brothers, that they would neither be ungenerous enough to injure him, nor to abandon him to his fate. Thus addressing them, with tears in his eyes, he resumed his way; and about the middle of the day it so happened, that he again fell in with the two cavaliers who had agreed to leave him. Weary with travelling along the shore, where nothing was found to satisfy the cravings of hunger and thirst, Vitrio determined to strike into the interior of the country. They soon afterwards arrived at a spot where two pathways met; one of which appeared new and spacious, the other untravellered, and overgrown with

briars and thorns. Vitrio, here recollecting the advice given him by his father, never to abandon the old path to walk in the new, came to the resolution of persevering in the thorny way. Upon observing this, the two cavaliers who had before abandoned him, began to reproach him with his folly in persevering in a road which would certainly lead his companions into destruction. But Vitrio, deigning not to reply, pursued the path which he had chosen, followed by Lambrone and Gelso only, two of his attendants, who still remained faithful to him. The sun had scarcely gone down before the latter travellers reached a large town called Rama, at a short distance from Zaffo; a place to which a great number of Christians used to resort. Gelso, who understood the language of the country, there procured provisions for their support, and the following day they arrived at Zaffo; while the two cavaliers, who had traversed the great road, attended by the rest of the crew, were all surprised and cut off by banditti, with the exception of a single man, who brought tidings of their fate to Zaffo. In a few days they again resumed their journey, and had the good fortune to reach Jerusalem, where, after religiously observing their vows, they bent their way towards the sea-shore, and, passing into Cyprus, the prince there fell sick, and was confined to his couch

for the space of a year. When he recovered, his two faithful friends, Gelso and Lambrone, likewise fell sick, and died soon after. Vitrio shed many tears over their graves, and it was long before he again recovered sufficient fortitude to resume his way, whithersoever his destiny might lead. But tears availed him nothing, and, having exhausted his other resources, he betook himself to a few jewels, which he disposed of to the best advantage, and proceeded slowly towards Nicosia. He there remained some time in the court of King Treilus, who, pleased with his gentle manners, no less than with the story of his adventures, granted him a refuge from the assaults of fortune. But even here, alas, she did not long cease to persecute him; for a daughter of Theodoro, lord of Arzuffo, becoming deeply enamoured of him, soon gave him to understand, by secret messages, that she had bestowed upon him her whole heart, and loved him more than herself. Again recollecting his father's instructions, not to attach himself to any woman but his lawful wife, Vitrio received her overtures with the utmost coldness, and at length began to avoid her presence, in order to shew his decided aversion to her suit. The consequences of this proceeding were soon felt by Vitrio, for the lady, indignant at his rejection of her advances, changed her

love into the fiercest anger and disdain. In order to ensure a safe revenge, she gave orders to her nurse, to deposit a case of jewellery under the young prince's couch; and the wicked old woman having obeyed her, the prince was immediately accused by the offended lady of having committed the theft. After enduring solitary confinement for the space of two years; he was sentenced to terminate his days upon the gallows. Now it was an ancient custom of the island, that every criminal, condemned to death, had the power of redeeming himself by the payment of two thousand byzants. But this unhappy youth had already expended all his resources in feeing the judges, the advocates, and the courtiers, in order to obtain the exercise of their influence in a final appeal to the monarch. In fact he was now completely destitute, and there was nothing left for him, but to summon fortitude to die. His eyes were already bound, and he was fast approaching the scene of execution, when a beautiful maiden, who had lately succeeded to a large inheritance, observed him passing along, buried in the profoundest affliction. Taking compassion on his fate, and impelled by a tenderer feeling, she instantly offered the amount of the fine, and claimed, at the same time, the young man's deliverance, if he would consent to accept her as his spouse.

It is impossible now to describe the mental struggles of the unfortunate youth, and we may justly estimate the magnanimity of his soul, in hesitating as to a proposal of marriage, although the preservation of his life depended upon his acceptance of it. Even now he debated within himself whether to perish, or to violate the commands of his holy religion, by taking two wives. In this emergency he recollected the injunction of his father, not to marry until he had seen the lady, and ascertained her nobility of birth; and he therefore requested to see the maiden, and to be informed as to her extraction. The bandage was removed from his eyes, and the officer, pointing out the lady, observed, "Behold the fair daughter of the merchant Palliedoro." On hearing these words, Vitrio, turning to the officers of justice, bade them lead on, for that he was content to suffer. "The crown of Navarre," he exclaimed, "must never sit upon the head of a merchant's daughter, however exalted a soul she may possess. Heaven, I trust, will grant her a better husband than I shall ever make her; and as for me, if it be well that I should escape, God will yet provide the means." Hearing these expressions, and beholding the firm and noble deportment of the prisoner, the chief officer despatched a messenger to the king, saying, that the

youthful stranger had refused the price of his redemption, and the hand of the rich daughter of Palliodoro. The king then ordered Vitrio to be brought before him, and obtained from him a full confession of his previous history, of his long wanderings and sufferings, after having fled with his father, and begged their bread in foreign lands: "Compassionate, then," continued Vitrio, "most noble prince, my strange and unhappy fortunes. Permit me not to suffer, until my accusers have been again examined: you will find that I am innocent, and that I do not deserve to die. Your majesty will not, therefore, deny me that justice which I have not yet received." The two women being then brought into the presence of the king, and threatened with torture if they did not forthwith reveal the whole truth, immediately confessed the falsehood of the charge, and were condemned to perpetual imprisonment.

The monarch then commanded a noble vessel to be fitted out, in order to convey the stranger to the shores of Spain. Returning his grateful thanks, Vitrio departed, and soon after landed in the territories of King Severus, and proceeded towards his court, reflecting on the results of his obedience to his dear father's precepts. It was just on the point of nightfall, as he reached the outskirts of the royal

palace, where, giving his name to the astonished officers, who had long numbered him with the dead, he proceeded up the staircase, and along the spacious galleries, alone. The first object which he beheld, on approaching the scene of his former pleasures and power, was a lady caressing an infant in her arms; the same lady, whom he had left so young, his own cherished and honored bride. His first impulse was a feeling of jealousy, and, believing that she was caressing an adulterous offspring, he was on the point of unsheathing his sword, and sacrificing them both to his revenge. But the memory of his father once more rushed into his mind: "Never," he exclaimed within himself, "strike your foe, until you have thrice drawn your sword from its scabbard:" and he stood and gazed fearfully some moments at the lady and the child. The latter, startled at the glittering blade, ran screaming towards its mother, who sat with her face turned partly aside from her husband's view, crying out that a man was coming to kill him. "Sleep, sleep, little foolish one," replied his mother; "no man, since my dear husband left me, has ever passed this sad chamber-door." Catching the sound of these words, Vitrio, breathing a prayer of gratitude to his father's spirit, quickly sheathed his sword, and hearing his child repeating

the name of mother, he rushed forward, and the next moment found them both clasped within his arms. His voice and features were still so familiar to the fancy of the princess, that she knew him in a moment; and a sudden flood of joyous tears at once expressed and relieved the deep emotions of her breast. The tidings quickly spreading abroad, the prince was immediately introduced into the presence of the king, who received him as if he had recovered his own son. A general festival was in consequence proclaimed throughout the kingdom, and jousts and tournaments were celebrated. The king of Portugal, his father-in-law, demonstrated no less satisfaction at his return, which he evinced by the pomp and magnificence of his entertainments. In after years, Prince Vitrio succeeded to the throne of his grandfather, to which, before his decease, he added the sceptre of his uncle, and of his wife's father, thus reigning over three several countries. He was blessed with a numerous progeny, and as he had always approved himself a fond and obedient son, he had the delight of embracing only wise and affectionate children.

NOVELLA V.

THERE WAS ONCE a gentleman of Verona, named Messer Ugo da Santa Sofia, who devoted himself with such assiduity to the study of the arts and sciences, and especially to the contemplation of the heavenly bodies, that he had become famous throughout the whole country. Whether planets, or fixed or wandering stars, fiery comets, satellites, or lunar orbs, he boasted the most intimate acquaintance with all their motions, and foretold their revolutions in heaven, without the risk which he incurred, when he ventured to prophecy respecting those which should happen on earth. He foretold the death of King Robert, and the succession of a female to the throne. The confines of Hungary, he predicted, were to extend even as far as Greece, and would afterwards reach the plain of Troy; and he smelt the approach of that horrid pestilence, which committed such dreadful devastations in the memorable year 1348. But suffice it to observe, that the accuracy of his predictions was such, that his reputation spread through Europe, and none of its princes ever found themselves in difficulty, without sending for Messer

Ugo, to enjoy the advantage of his sage admonitions. We must not be surprised, therefore, to hear that he became a little vain of these his unearthly powers, which, in his own opinion, were altogether infallible. Now it so fell out, that one day during harvest time he went to his country house, for he took great pleasure in seeing the corn threshed in the barn; when one of his neighbours, an ancient villager, very well off in the world, called upon him to communicate what he considered to be rather important information, at that season of the year. Being somewhat lame in one of his legs, he was in the habit of riding a beautiful ass, from which he now alighted at the door of Messer Ugo." "I have called upon you, as I was riding by, just to tell you, Messer Ugo, that I think it would be prudent in you to take care of your corn, which has been cut so long, during this threatening weather: for within an hour hence, we shall have such a tremendous storm, that you will imagine the very heavens are about to tumble upon our heads." Our philosopher, with great coolness, inquired how his neighbour alone came to be in possession of this secret, and after gazing round the horizon on all sides, unable to detect the least black spot, which frequently portends the distant storm, he turned a look of quiet contempt upon the good coun-

tryman, observing, "The sky is quite clear, the sun mild, and not even a cloud upon the mountains, and yet you are bold enough to prognosticate a storm. Why, there is a soft south wind blowing, and the sun is in the right sign, and the right degree; nothing less than a miracle can make it rain. Nature herself could not make it rain now; with the help of Providence, to be sure, she might; but, as she stands disposed at present, it is impossible we can have any rain." He continued to debate the point with the countryman for a long while, without making the least impression upon him; the only answer he received was, that Messer Ugo would be much better employed in giving orders to have his grain quickly housed, than in wasting arguments upon him, as the approaching tempest would not merely destroy the corn, but beat down trees, scatter herds and flocks, and shake the houses to their foundations. Messer Ugo's choler now rose to such a height at the countryman's strange pertinacity, that he was much inclined to bestow upon him a box on the ear; but instead of this, he so far controlled his indignation as first to consult his telescope and compasses, with which he once more examined the heavens more narrowly than before, yet still drawing the same conclusion, that rain for that day, at least, was quite out

of the question, expecting as soon to see the mountains levelled with the plains, or the rivers flowing over the hills. Finding that he could be of no use, the villager at length took his leave, and he had scarcely dismounted at home, before a dark speck became visible in the horizon, and, swelling with the rising wind, in a short time obscured the face of the sun itself. Strong lightnings soon afterwards began to play towards the north, while the wind changing gradually into the east, floods of rain, resembling water-spouts rather than a common shower, emptied themselves into the bosom of the west, already torn by the rising conflict of the elements. As the torrents of rain increased, the reverberating thunders and the livid lights, instead of dying away, seemed to gather double strength in an almost unheard of manner: such as we may suppose pealed over the heads of the fierce Titans, when rising in rash revolt, they experienced the indignation of their father Jove. Towers and steeples tottered to their base, the loftiest oaks lay prostrate, the river Adige rose and burst its old embankments, while the proudest palaces with their royal inmates trembled, as if anticipating the dissolution of the groaning fabric of the world. But where was poor Messer Ugo, with his famous astrological observations during this time,

and where was all his unhoarded grain? It was an equally severe blow upon his property and his pride; he almost wished he had never become versed in a knowledge of the stars, since he found himself thus shamefully imposed upon by the weather. His fine corn was flying all abroad, a prey to the fierce elements, and he sorely repented him of having turned a deaf ear to his neighbour, whose precaution would have so well availed him. Away he flung his square and compasses, his astrolabe, and his whole apparatus, in the rage of the moment, while he watched the wild progress of the storm; every moment appearing an age, until it should have so far subsided, as to permit him to creep with safety to his honest neighbour, to entreat his pardon, and to inquire by what art he had foretold this dreadful tempest, in the midst of a perfect calm. At length, with some difficulty, during a pause of the awful blast, he contrived to reach his door; and, after apologizing to him in a meek and faltering tone, he besought him to explain in what way he could possibly have foreseen such a calamity. "There is certainly," he continued, "some superior master in the same art as my own, whom you must have applied to on this occasion." "That is very true, Messer Ugo," replied the villager; "I have consulted him, and he

is no other than the pretty animal upon which you saw me mounted. My own ass unfolded the secret to me, as he has done many others of the same nature before. He can tell fair weather, too, as well as foul ; and I never in my life was in need of any other weather-glass : he takes a more exact survey of the heavens than the best glass or compass could possibly do. I always remark, that when the weather is going to be extremely rough, he sets up his back, his hairs stand on end, and he hides his tail between his legs, shaking as if he were in an ague. But if we are merely going to have a moderate breeze, it is quite another thing, for then he only holds his tail between his legs for a few moments, lashing his sides, and if no thunder and lightning follow, he will scarcely do so much. But when we are to be visited with such a fierce tempest as we have had to-day, you should mind what he says of you ; he never in all his life gave me such an awful warning before. For he first directed all his ears and eyes as it were up into the sky ; he stopped and listened ; and then he leaped up, and beat the earth with his four feet, as if all the horse flies in the world had been devouring him ; so I thought I would just step and tell you our opinion upon the subject, for my noble beast and I are always perfectly of one accord

on this point. Nor should you, with all your vast stores of learning, Messer Ugo, be surprised at this ; for how is it that the cock informs us so exactly of the hour, as if he had got a little piece of watch-work in his head ? How is it in the least more strange than what we hear of the dolphins gamboling before the luckless vessels, with their curved backs upon the surface, warning the poor sailors of the tempest at hand ? Why should not my ass be supposed to know something likewise upon the subject ?”

Messer Ugo da Santa Sofia had not a word to utter in reply ; he had now fairly the worst of the argument, and at length candidly confessed his admiration of the superior tact and foresight of the ass, grieving, however, at the same time, that the long-eared steed of Carabotto, (the name of the good villager) should be, after all, a greater astrologer than himself, who had actually grown grey in the service of the stars, the tides, and the causes of every thing which happens here below. He entreated his good neighbour to keep the matter secret, at least for a while, lest his reputation should suffer in the opinion of the world. The countryman very kindly promised that he would do so, but whether he really did or not is uncertain, as the affair quickly took wind, though most probably from some witnesses, who must have

been present at the controversy previous to the storm. Certain it is, that the whole country was speedily in possession of the secret, and of much amusement in consequence, it being every where said, that the ass of Carabotto had turned out at last a greater astrologer than the great Messer Ugo da Santa Sofia di Verona himself. The saying became at length quite proverbial, and nothing was more common than to hear a man answer a very pertinacious enemy, by observing, "Yes, I dare say, you think you know more astrology than Carabotto's ass;" which generally brought another reply much as follows: "Go, go, for you know less than poor Messer Ugo da Santa Sofia himself."

When our unhappy astronomer learned that the matter was publicly divulged throughout all Lombardy, he went into such a violent fit of passion, that he actually seized and committed to the flames more than two thousand crowns' worth of astrological books and instruments: quadrants, spheres, and nativities, all fell a prey to the fiery element; and he used even to walk with his eyes fixed upon the ground, to avoid contemplating the heavens, which, after all his long labours, had so egregiously deceived him.

NOVELLA VI.

It was said of Messer Leandro de' Traversari, canon of Ravenna, that, from the opening to the close of his mortal career, he invariably evinced the most decided enmity to truth. He had such a total disregard for this invaluable quality, that if he ever happened to stumble upon the truth, he betrayed as much melancholy and regret, as if he had actually sinned against the Holy Ghost. Besides, he was not merely the most notorious assertor of "the thing which is not" himself, but the cause of falsehood in others, compelling his very friends and dependents to confirm his wicked statements, under penalty of incurring his most severe spiritual displeasure.

There was a certain Florentine, who had lately entered into his service, and who perceiving his master's peculiarity in this respect, resolved not merely to humour him in it, but to add something further on his own part, in order the better to recommend himself to his notice. He one day availed himself of an opportunity, when walking with the good canon in the gardens of the archbishop, near the city, to give his master a specimen of his inventive powers. Ob-

serving the gardener employed in planting cauliflowers, the prelate happened to remark, "These cauliflowers grow to a surprising size; their bulk is quite prodigious; I believe no one can bring them to such rare perfection as my gardener." As the latter did not care to contradict this testimony, so favourable to his character, Messer Leandro subjoined to the observation of his superior, "Yes, my lord; but if you had ever seen those that grow in Cucagna, you would not think these so very extraordinary in point of size." "Why, how large may they grow?" inquired the archbishop. "How large?" returned Messer Leandro, "I can scarcely give your lordship an idea of it. In those parts I hear it is no uncommon thing for twenty knights on horseback to take shelter together under their huge cabbage leaves." The archbishop expressing no slight astonishment at these words, the wily Florentine stepped forward to his master's relief, saying: "Your excellency will not be so much surprised, when I inform your excellency that I have myself seen these magnificent cabbages growing in that strange country; and I have seen the immense cauldrons in which they are boiled, of such a vast construction, that twenty workmen are engaged in framing them at once; and it is said, that the sound of their hammers cannot be heard from

opposite sides, as they sit in the huge vessel to complete their work." The noble prelate, whose intellect was not of the highest order, opened his eyes still wider upon the Florentine, exclaiming, that he fancied such a capacious saucepan would contain sufficient food, were it rightly calculated, for the whole people of Cairo at one meal.

While they were thus engaged, a person made his approach, with an ape upon his shoulders, intended as a present for the venerable archbishop, who, turning towards the canon, with a smiling countenance, noticed the very singular resemblance between the human figure and that of the sagacious animal before them. "It is my serious opinion," continued he, "that if the beast had only a little more intellect, there would not be so much difference between him and ourselves, as some people imagine."—"I trust," replied the worthy canon, "your lordship would not mean to insinuate that monkeys really want sense; for, if so, I can soon, I think, convince your lordship of the contrary, by a story pretty apposite to the purpose.

"The noble lord Almerico, was one day feasting the good bishop of Vicenza, having given orders to his cook to prepare all the varieties and delicacies of the season. Now the cook was in possession of

an excellent method of guarding the treasures of his kitchen ; for which purpose he kept an invaluable ape, excellently tutored to the business. No man, not even the boldest, ventured to steal the least thing in his presence, until a certain footman, from Savignano, more greedy than a horse-leach, and unable to check his thieving propensities, hit upon what he considered a safe means of eluding the monkey's observation. He began to cultivate his acquaintance, by performing all kinds of amusing tricks, and bribing him to be in good humour. The moment he perceived the ape busily engaged in imitating what he saw, the rogue, binding a handkerchief over his own eyes, in a short time handed it likewise to the mimic, and with secret pleasure beheld him fastening it over his face ; during which time he contrived to lay his hands upon a fat capon, which the ape, though too late, soon afterwards perceived. The head-cook upon this occasion gave his monkeyship so severe a flogging, that being doubly cautious, the next time the thievish footman repeated the same tricks, and proceeded to bandage his eyes, the wily animal, instead of imitating him, stared around him with all his eyes, pointing at the same time to his paws, as if advising him to keep his hands from picking and stealing ; so that the rogue was, this

time, compelled to depart, with his hands as empty as they came. Finding that all his arts were of no avail"——The archbishop here overpowered with wonder and delight, exclaimed, "If this be only true, it is one of the most astonishing things I ever heard." The assiduous Florentine upon this again interposed in his master's behalf, crying out with singular force of gesticulation: "As I hope to be saved at the last day, please your grace, what my honoured patron has just advanced is every particle of it true; and as your grace appears to take a particular pleasure in listening to strange and almost unaccountable events, I will now beg leave to add a single story in addition to those of my noble patron, however inferior in point of excellence:

"During the last vintage, I was in the service of a gentleman at Ferrara, of the name of Libanoro, who took singular pleasure in fishing, and used frequently to explore the recesses of the vale of Santo Appollinare. This master of mine had also an ape in his possession, considerably larger than your excellency's, and, while he was in the country, he commissioned me to take along with me to Ferrara this said ape, a barrel of white wine, and a fat pig; in order to present them to a certain convenient ruffian, whom he kept in his service. So I took a boat, and plying

oars and sail, while we were bounding along the waters, I gave the skiff a sudden jerk, which made the pig's fat sides shake, and he went round like a turnspit, performing the strangest antics. So loud and vehement were his lamentations, that they seemed to annoy his apeship excessively, who after in vain trying to stop his ears and nose, at length seized the plug out of the barrel that stood near him, and fairly thrust it down the pig's throat, just as he was opening it to give another horrible cry. Both the wine and the pig were in extreme jeopardy, the one actually choking, and the other running all away. I tried to save as much of it as I could ; but my immoderate laughter almost prevented me ; so much was I amused at his ingenious contrivance. So that your grace may perceive," continued the mendacious Florentine, "that my master speaks the simple truth, in asserting that these animals are possessed of great acuteness of intellect." Now, on returning home, the good canon thus addressed his servant : "I thought, sirrah, there was no man living who could tell a lie with a bolder and better face than myself ; but you have undeceived me : you are the very prince of liars and impostors ; the father of lies himself could not surpass you !"—"Your reverence," replied the Florentine, "need not be surprised at that, when I in-

form you of the advantages I have enjoyed in the society of tailors, millers, and bargemen, who live upon the profit they bring. But if from this time forth, you insist upon my persevering in confirming so many monstrous untruths as you utter, I trust that you will consent to increase my wages, in consideration of so abominable a business."—"Well then, listen to me," replied his master; "when it is my intention to come out with some grand and extraordinary falsehood, I will take care to tell you the evening before, and at the same time I will always give you such a gratuity as shall make it worth your while. And if I should happen to tell a good story after dinner, as you stand behind my chair, and you swear to having seen it, very innocently, you may depend upon it you shall be no loser." This his servant agreed to do, upon condition that he would observe some bounds, and keep up some shew, at least, of reason and probability; which the honest canon said, so far as he was able, he would try to do; adding, that if they were not reasonable lies, the servant should not be bound by the contract, and might return the gift.

Thus the most wonderful adventures continued to be related at the good canon's table, and what is more extraordinary, they were all very dexterously

confirmed. So going on very amicably together, the canon, one evening intending to impose a monstrous lie upon one of his friends, took down a pair of old breeches; and presented them to his servant as the requisite gift. In the morning, attending his master to church as usual, he heard him, after service, relating a story to one of the holy brotherhood, who stood swallowing it all, with a very serious face, how in the island of Pastinaca the magpies are accustomed to get married in proper form and ceremony; and how, after laying, and sitting upon their eggs for the space of a month, they bring forth little men, not larger than ants, but astonishingly bold and clever. The Florentine upon this could no longer restrain his feelings, crying out before the whole company: "No, no, I cannot swear to this neither; so you may take back your breeches, master, and get somebody else in my place."

NOVELLA XIII.

RICCARDO CAPPONI, a noble Florentine, having devoted himself in early life to trade, in the course of time realised a very handsome property. When advanced in years, he took his son, Vincenti, into partnership, and not long after gave up his whole mercantile concern into his hands; and falling into a bad state of health, owing either to his great exertions, or to his subsequent high living, he became unable to leave the house.

His son, Vincenti, who was of an extremely avaricious disposition, finding his father continued to linger much beyond the period his covetous and ungrateful heart would have assigned him, and unwilling longer to support him, took measures, under pretence of obtaining for him better medical advice than he could at home provide, to have him conveyed to the city hospital. Yet his affairs were then in a flourishing state; and every thing that he possessed he owed to his unhappy parent, whose age and infirmities, whose tears and entreaties, he alike disregarded. This unnatural son could not, however, contrive to conduct the matter so secretly as to elude the

observation and the reproaches of all classes of people in the city. He at first tried to impose, both upon his friends and the public, by the false representations which he set on foot; but finding these could not avail him, he resolved, in order the better to disarm the popular voice against him, to send his own children with little presents to their grandfather.

On one occasion he gave to his eldest boy, about six years of age, two fine cambric shirts, desiring him, early the next morning, to take them carefully to his poor grandfather in the hospital. The little boy, with an expression of great respect and tenderness in his countenance, promised that he would do so; and on his return the next day, his father, calling him into his presence, inquired whether he had delivered them safe into the hands of his grandfather? "I only gave him one, father," replied the little boy. "What!" exclaimed Vincenti, with an angry voice; "did I not tell you both were for your grandfather?"—"Yes," returned the little fellow, with a steady and undaunted look; "but I thought that I would keep one of them for you, father, against the time when I shall have to send you, I hope, to the hospital." "How!" exclaimed Vincenti, "would you ever have the cruelty to send me there, my

boy?" "Why not?" retorted the lad; "let him that does evil, expect evil in return. For you know you made your own father go there, old and ailing as he is, and he never did you any harm in his life, and do you think I shall not send you, when I am able? Indeed, father, I am resolved that I will; for, as I have said before, let him that does evil, expect evil in return."

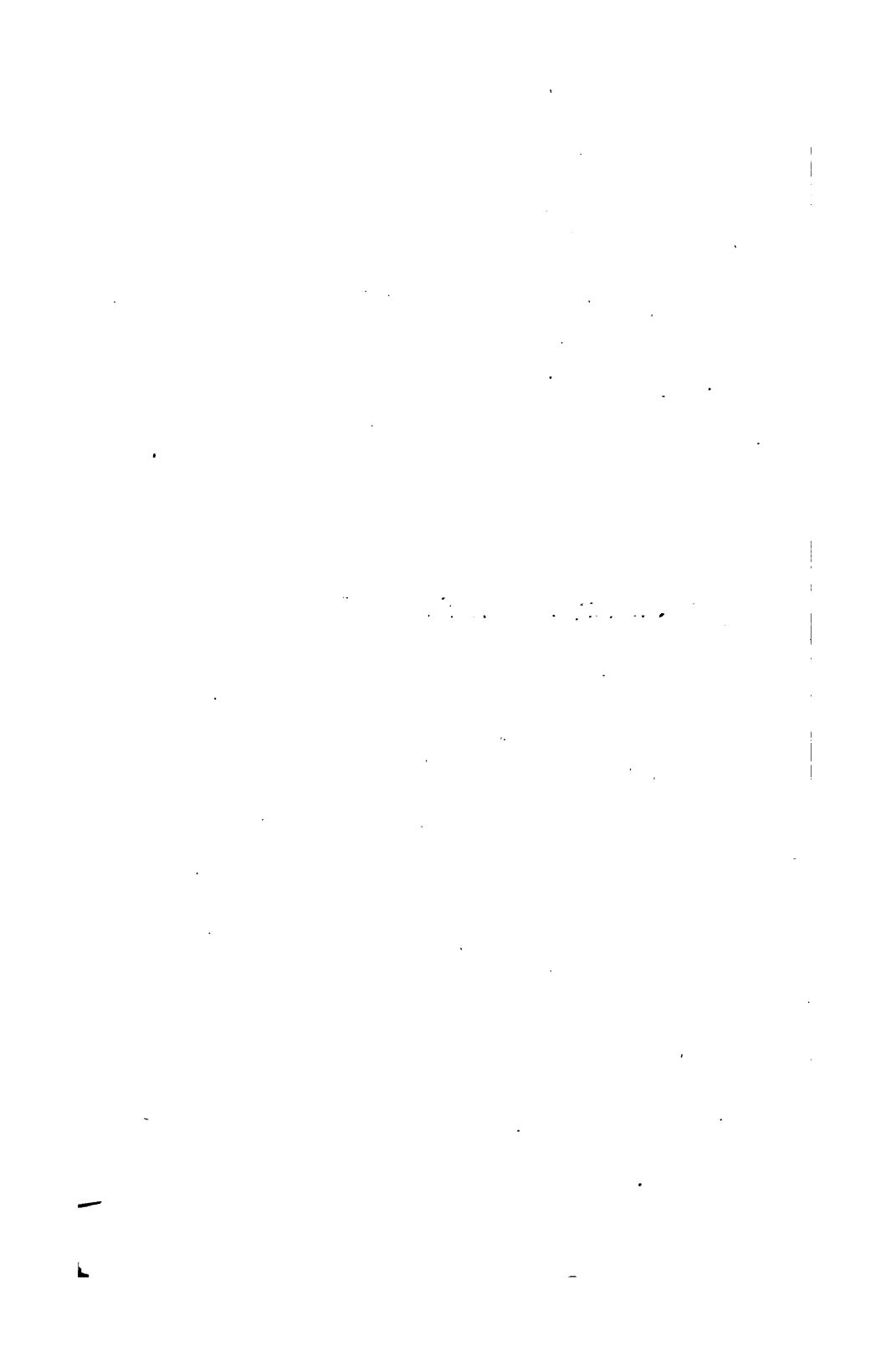
On hearing these words, Vincenti, giving signs of the utmost emotion, as if suddenly smitten by the hand of heaven, sorely repented of the heinous offence against humanity and justice which he had committed. He hastened himself to the hospital; he entreated his father's pardon on his knees, and had him conveyed instantly home; ever afterwards shewing himself a gentle and obedient son, and frequently administering to his aged parent's wants with his own hands.

This incident gave rise, throughout all Tuscany, to the well known proverb above mentioned, "Let him that does evil, expect evil in return;"* and from Tuscany it passed into many other parts of Italy.

* Chi la fa, l'aspetta.



Gioban. Francesco Straparola.



GIOVAN-FRANCESCO STRAPAROLA.

THIS author was born at Caravaggio, and is ranked among the Venetian writers, having chiefly resided, and composed his works, at Venice. He is to be esteemed rather an useful than a very happy and amusing novelist, inasmuch as he furnished a large collection of stories for the benefit of his successors, many of which are considered curious in illustrating the progress of fiction; "chiefly," says Mr. Dunlop, "as being the source of those fairy tales which were so prevalent in France in the commencement of the eighteenth century."

The first portion of his *Piacevoli Notti*,* was published in the year 1650, at Venice, and the second part at the same place, in 1654. Four more editions afterwards appeared, comprehending the entire work, amounting in the whole to seventy-four tales. In the introduction, we are told that a princess and her father, having fallen from their high estate, became attached to a party of private persons, who for their

* *Tredici Piacevoli Notti*. Venice, 1654.

amusement, during the summer evenings, relate stories, which are continued through the cool and pleasant hours of an Italian night. In a letter addressed "Alle Piacevoli Donne," dated the 11th of January, 1554, and prefixed to his novels, he informs them, that he presents the stories just as he heard them repeated from the lips of some fair friends. He trusts, therefore, that they will not find fault with the simple and familiar style in which they are written, being copied by him just as he found them, and not being of his own composition. He is certainly correct, in disclaiming the merit of originality, since many of his tales are borrowed from Apuleius, some from the *Novelle Antiche*, and others from Giovanni Brevio; such as the story of the nuptials of Belphegor, which forms the fourth tale of the second night. Straparola was indisputably a better collector than an author. He has, however, the merit of having supplied Molière with his "*Ecole des Femmes*;" and, indeed, with several other plots for his inimitable comedies. Together with Boccaccio, he may be considered the great storehouse from which the French dramatists have drawn their subjects, while they affected to despise the authors of them.

Besides this novel, Straparola produced a work entitled *Opera Nuova*, consisting of sonnets and other

poems, published at Venice in 1515, though he is not ranked among the Italian poets of Crescimbeni. It is observed by Mr. Dunlop,* that he levied his heaviest contributions upon the eighty novels of Jerome Morlini, a work written in Latin, and printed at Naples, in 1520, 4to.; but now almost utterly unknown, from which thirteen are literally translated into the Italian, and many of the rest closely imitated.

* History of Fiction, vol. ii. p. 446.

GIOVAN-FRANCESCO STRAPAROLA.

TENTH NIGHT, NOVELLA IV.

IN Como, a little city of Lombardy, not very far from Milan, there once dwelt a citizen of the name of Andrigetto da Sabbia, whose immense possessions, surpassing those of any other individual, did not, however, prevent him from adding to them by every means in his power. Being perfectly secure against the attacks of conscience in all his dealings, he was never known to suffer remorse for the most unjustifiable actions. He was in the habit of disposing of the produce of his large estates to the poorer citizens and peasantry, instead of selling it to merchants and others, who could command ready money; not from any charitable motives, but in order to obtain possession of their little remaining property, still uniting field after field to the great possessions he had already acquired. It happened that so great a scarcity began to prevail in the city and its vicinity, that many persons actually perished of want, while numbers had recourse to our old usurer for assistance; to

whom, from the urgent pressure of circumstances, they were compelled to make over, in return for the necessities of life, such interest as they might possess, either in houses or lands. The concourse of people in his neighbourhood was so great as almost to resemble a jubilee or a public fair. Now there was a certain notary, Tonisto Raspante by name, a most notorious and wily practitioner of his art, and more successful than any other of his brethren in emptying the pockets of the poor villagers. He had still, however, so much regard for an ancient law in Como, relating to usurious contracts, which required the money lent to be counted in the presence of proper witnesses, as to refuse to draw up such instruments as Andrigetto often directed him to prepare, observing that they were altogether against the form of the statute, and he would not venture to risk the penalty. But such were the overbearing manners of the old miser, and so great was his authority in the city, that sometimes threatening him with ruin, and at other times bribing him to his purpose, he compelled the attorney to obey his commands. The time for confessing himself being at hand, before presenting himself at the confessional, Andrigetto took care to send to the priest an excellent dinner, with as much of the finest cloth as would make a

pair of hose for himself and his servant, announcing at the same time his intention to confess on the ensuing day, when he thought that he was sure of meeting with a favourable hearing. The priest undertook with pleasure the task of absolving from his sins so eminent and rich a citizen, and received his penitent with the utmost cordiality. Andrigetto fell on his knees before his spiritual father, accusing himself with very little ceremony of various sins and errors, not forgetting his usurious and illegal contracts, all which he recounted in the most minute manner. The priest, who had sense enough to perceive the enormous nature of his offences, conceiving himself bound to make some representations on the subject, ventured certain gentle hints on the impropriety of their repetition, and in the mean while strongly recommending restitution to the injured parties. Instead of taking this in good part, Andrigetto turned very sharply round upon his confessor, observing that he was at a loss to understand what he meant, and that he had better go, and return no more, until he had learned how to confess persons in a more rational manner. The priest, owing his preferment in a great measure to Andrigetto, and fearful lest he might lose his favour altogether, began to retract as well as he could, gave him absolution, and then imposing as

slight a penance as possible, received a florin for his reward, after which Andrigetto took his leave, in very excellent spirits.

Not long after this interview, our old usurer, while rejoicing in this absolution from all his sins, fell ill of a mortal distemper, and the physicians shortly despaired of his life. His friends and relatives having gathered round his bed, took the liberty of suggesting that it was now time to think of a sincere confession, to receive his last spiritual consolation, and make a final arrangement of his affairs, like a good catholic and a Christian. But the old gentleman, having hitherto devoted all his thoughts and exertions, both day and night, to the hoarding of his wealth, instead of being at all impressed by the awfulness of his situation, only replied with great levity to their arguments : still amusing himself with arranging the most trifling concerns, and evincing not the least uneasiness at his approaching end. After long entreaties and persuasions, he was at last prevailed upon to comply with their request, and agreed to summon to his assistance his old agent Tonisto Raspante, the notary, and father Neofito, his confessor.

On the arrival of these personages, they addressed the patient with a cheerful countenance, telling him

to keep up his spirits, for that with God's help he would soon be a sound man again. Andrigetto only replied that he feared he was too far gone for that, and that he had perhaps better lose no time in first settling his worldly affairs, and then arranging his ghostly concerns with his confessor. But the good priest, exhorting and comforting him to the best of his ability, advised him first of all to place his sole trust in the Lord, humbly submitting himself to his will, as the safest means of obtaining a restoration to health. To this, however, Andrigetto replied only by ordering seven respectable men to be called in as witnesses of his nuncupative last will and testament. These individuals having been successively presented to the patient, and taken their seats, he proceeded to inquire from his friend Tonisto, the very lowest charge which he was in the habit of making for penning a will. "According to the strict rules of the profession," replied Tonisto, "it is only a florin; but in general the amount is decided by the feelings of the testator." "Well, well, then," cried the patient, "take two florins; and set down what I tell you." The notary having invoked the divine name, drew out the preliminaries in the usual manner; bequeathing the body of the testator to the earth, and his soul to the hands of God who gave it, with humble

thanks for the many favours vouchsafed by him to his unworthy creature. This exordium being read to Andrigetto, he flew into a violent rage; and commanded the notary to write down nothing but his own words, which he dictated as follows: "I, Andrigetto di Valsabbia, being of sound mind, though infirm of body, do hereby declare this to be my last will and testament: I give and bequeath my soul into the hands of the great Satan, the prince of devils." Hearing these words, the witnesses stood aghast; Raspante's quill started from the paper, and in evident horror and perturbation, he stopped. Looking the testator very earnestly in the face, he interposed: "Ah! Messer Andrigetto, these are the words of a madman!" "How!" exclaimed Andrigetto, in a violent passion, "what do you mean? How dare you stop? Write word for word as I direct you, and nothing more; or you shall never be paid for a will of mine: proceed, I tell you." Struck with the greatest horror and surprise, his friends attempted to remonstrate with him, lamenting that he should make use of language so opposite to his usual good sense, language which only madmen or blasphemers could be capable of using on such a subject, and in so awful a situation as his. "Desist, then," they continued, "for heaven's sake, and con-

sult your honour, and the safety of your poor soul. Think of the scandal such a proceeding would bring upon your family, if you, who were esteemed so prudent and so wise, were to make yourself an example of all that is perfidious, ungrateful, and impious towards heaven."

But Andrigetto paid no further attention to their reproaches, than by observing that his business was with his attorney, and that as he had not yet finished his will, they had better take care what they were about; on which there was soon a respectful silence throughout the room. He then turned towards his attorney, requesting to know, in a voice of suppressed passion, whether he was prepared to go on, as he had already offered to pay double the usual charge for his labours. Apprehensive that Andrigetto might expire before he had made a disposition of his property, the notary promised to do as he was required, more especially when he heard the patient beginning to hiccup with the violence of his emotions; so that he was compelled to make a solemn vow to fulfil his client's instructions.

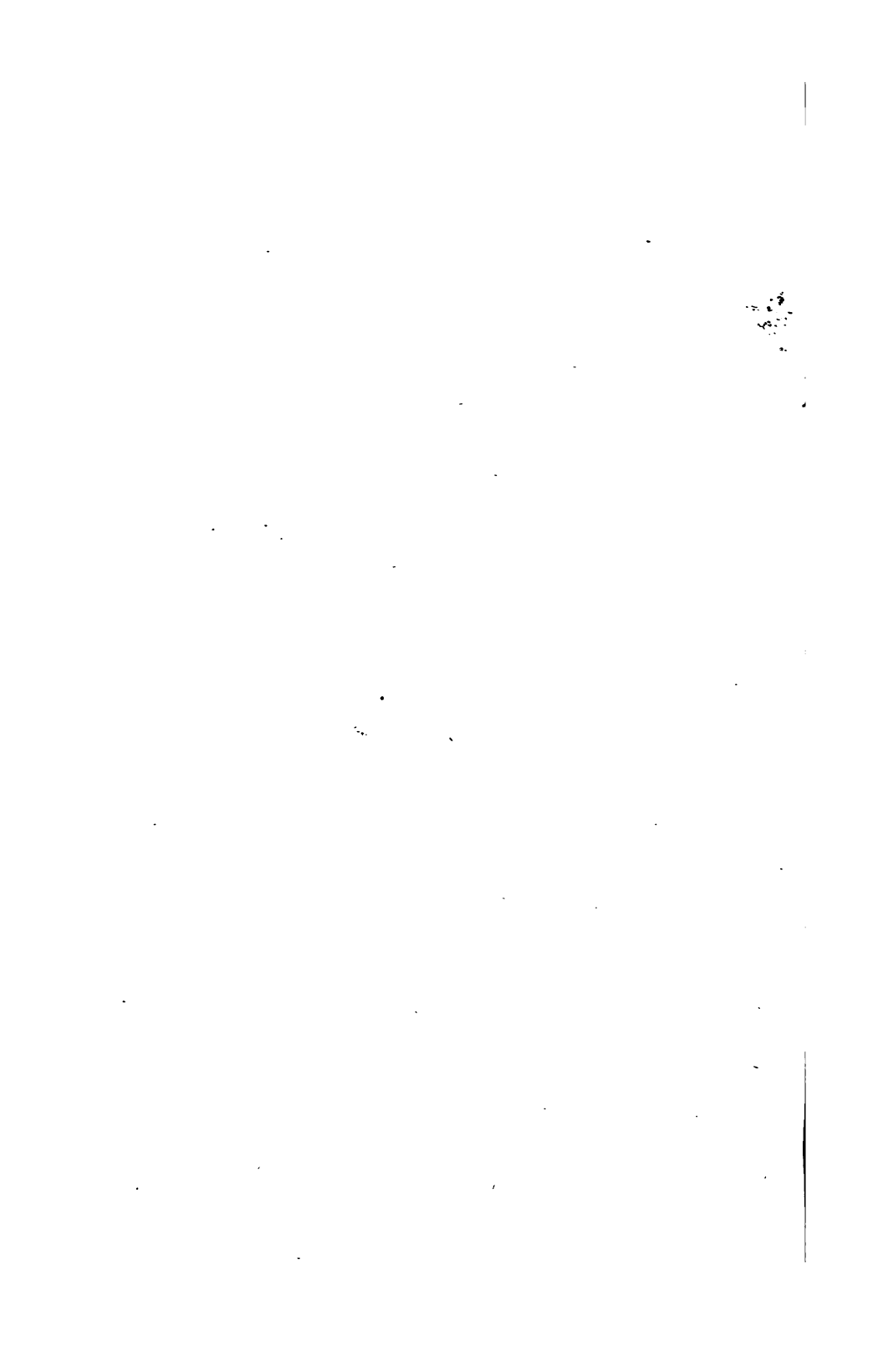
"Item," continued Andrigetto, "I hereby bequeath the wretched soul of my wicked agent Tonisto Raspante, to the great Satan, in order that it may keep company with mine when it leaves this world,

as it shortly must." "The Lord have mercy on me!" cried the poor attorney, shocked at the deep solemnity with which these last words were uttered, "the Lord have mercy on my soul!" and the pen dropped from his hand. "Recal," he continued, "my honoured patron, recal those wicked words; do any thing but destroy my eternal interests, my last, my dearest hopes." "Go on, you rogue," cried the testator, "and do not venture to interrupt me again; do not tell me about your soul. You have your pay, and that is enough; so proceed quickly as I shall direct you. I leave my said attorney's soul to the devil, for this reason; that if he had not consented to draw up so many false and usurious contracts, but had driven me from his presence as soon as I proposed them, I should not now find myself reduced to the sad extremity of leaving both our souls to the king of hell, owing entirely to his shameful cupidity, and want of common honesty." The attorney, though trembling at the name of the king of hell, yet fearful lest his patron might enter into further particulars far from creditable to him, wrote as he was commanded.

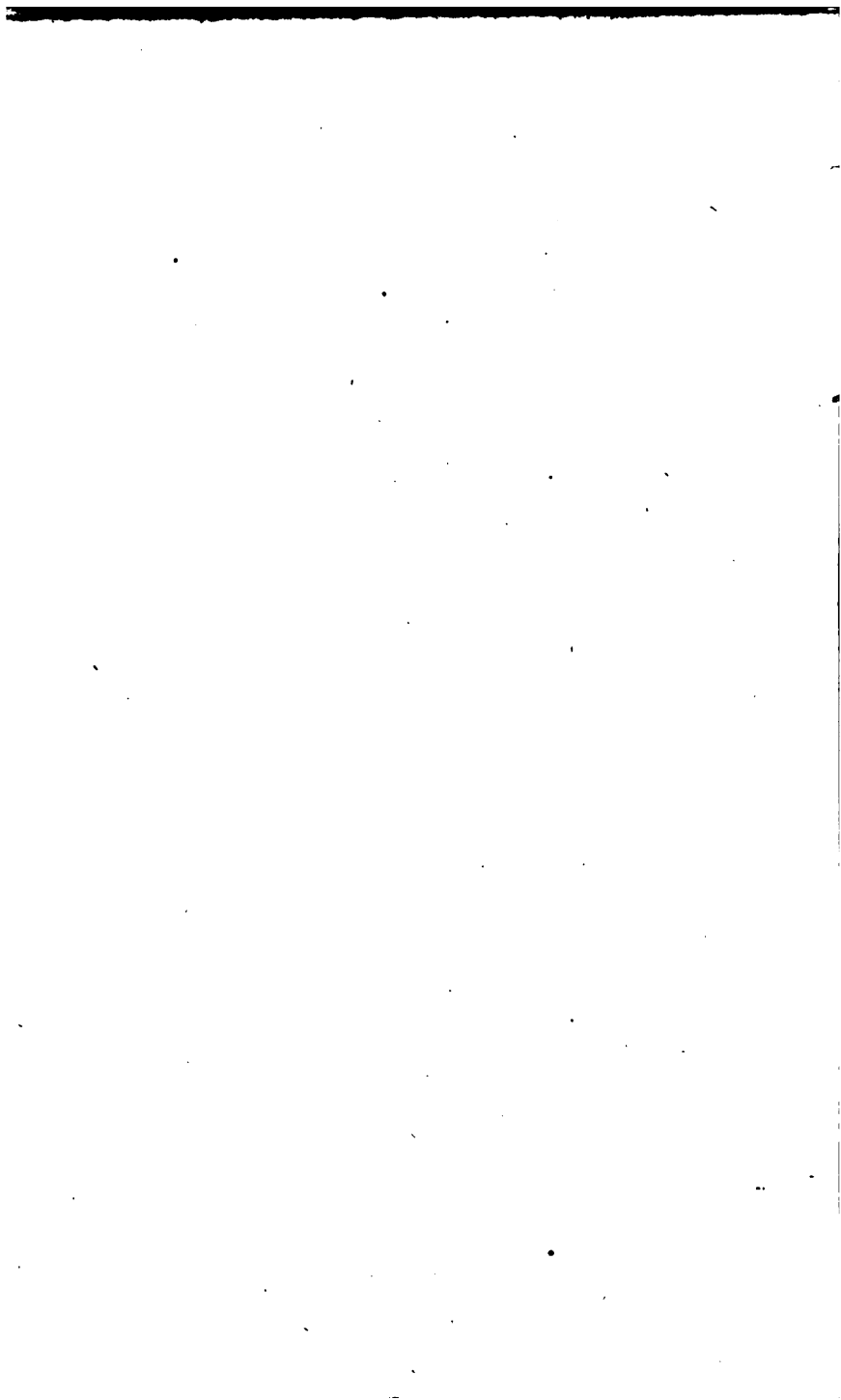
"Item," continued the patient, "I bequeath the soul of father Neofito, my confessor, into the claws of Lucifer; aye, to thirty thousand pair of devils."

"Stop, Messer Andrigetto, pray stop," cried the priest; "and do not think of applying those dreadful words to me. You ought to put your trust in the Lord, in the Lord Jesus, whose mercies always abound, who came to save sinners, and is still inviting them, night and day, to repentance. He died for our sins, and for your sins, Messer Andrigetto; you have only to beseech pardon, and all will yet be well. The road is still open to restitution; hasten to make restitution then; for the Lord does not wish the death of a sinner. You have great wealth; remember the church; you will have masses said for your soul, and may yet sit in the seats of paradise." "Oh, thou wicked and most wretched priest," retorted the patient, "by thy vile avarice and simony, thou hast helped thine own soul, as well as mine, into the pit of perdition. And dost thou now think of advising me to repent? Confusion on thy villainy! Write, notary, that I bequeath his soul to the very centre of the place of torments; for had it not been for his bold and shameless conduct in absolving me from my numerous and repeated offences, I should not now find myself in the strange predicament in which I am placed. What! does the rogue think it would be now just to restore my evil-gotten gains, and thus leave my poor family destitute? No,

no ; I am not quite such a fool as to do that ; so please to go on. Item. To my dear lady Felicia, I leave my pretty farm, situated in the district of Comacchio, in order to supply herself with the elegancies of life, and occasionally treat her lovers as she has been hitherto in the habit of doing, thus preparing the way further to oblige me with her company in the other world ; sharing with us the torments of eternity. The remainder of my property, as well personal as real, with all future interest and proceeds accruing thereon, I leave to my two legitimate and beloved sons, Commodo and Torquato, on condition that they give nothing for a single mass to be said for the soul of the deceased, but that they feast, swear, game, and fight, to the best of their ability, in order that they may the sooner waste their substance so wickedly acquired ; until driven to despair, they may as speedily as possible hang themselves. And this I declare to be my last will and testament. as witness all present, not forgetting my attorney." Having signed this instrument, and put his seal to it, Andrigetto turned away his face, and uttering a terrific howl, finally surrendered his impenitent soul to Pluto.



Novels of Matteo Bandello.



MATTEO BANDELLO.

ONE of the most favourite novelists of Italy belonging to the sixteenth century, and the most esteemed, with the single exception of Boccaccio, in other countries, next claims our attention. Matteo Bandello was born at Castelnovo, in the district of Tortona; though his chief residence was at Milan. He is there supposed to have produced the greatest part of his novels, until, alarmed at the frequent revolutionary commotions which agitated that city, then a prey to internal discord and foreign violence, he sought refuge in the French territories, not far from Agen, in company with his friend Cesare Fregoso. Here, in the castle of Bassen, he devoted himself with ardor to the restoration and revision of various productions, which had been either mutilated or destroyed by the incendiaries, who had set fire to his house in Milan. It was with difficulty, that through the medium of some of his friends, he rescued a portion of his novels from the hands of the ruffians, who in ransacking his house, found little other spoil than the fruits of his literary labours. On losing his

friend Fregoso, the companion of his retreat, who perished by assassination, he, in the year 1541, accepted the offer of Francis I., of the bishopric of Agen, to which he was accordingly appointed, and which he retained until the period of his death, which happened subsequently to the year 1555. It is said, but without sufficient foundation, that his life was protracted to the year 1561. His novels first appeared at Lucca, 1554, in quarto. They consist of four parts; the first, second, and third parts containing fifty-nine stories, and the fourth, twenty-eight: so that Bandello is to be considered as ranking at the same time among the best and the most voluminous of the Italian novelists. The work is dedicated to Ippolita Sforza, consort of Alessandro Bentivoglio, for whose amusement it is said to have been first undertaken; but she died before it was completed. The stories are, for the most part, rather drawn from historical incidents, than from the invention of the writer. He addresses them severally to some distinguished individual, independent of the general dedication; and he is always anxious to acquaint his reader with the event which gave rise to them, and to induce him to believe, that they are less imaginary than true. In general, he asserts that they are derived from stories which he heard related in com-

pany, and which he reports as exactly as he can, with the conversation which led to them. In regard to his style, if he does not deserve to be placed amongst the best writers, he is yet beyond mediocrity. He has been blamed, not without reason, for the inelegance and carelessness of his diction, and he may be considered as inferior in this respect to many less celebrated novelists of his day. The same negligence is also perceptible in the narration of his incidents; as an excuse for which, it has been observed by Echard, with an amusing simplicity, that we ought to recollect that he only undertook to transcribe his stories as he heard them repeated from the lips of others. The author, however, modestly disclaims all title to elegance of language, observing, that being a native of Lombardy, he was quite ignorant of the beauties of the Tuscan style. His novels have been translated into almost every tongue.

MATTEO BANDELLO.

PART I. NOVELLA LVII.*

IT is really superfluous, my noble friends and patrons, to use so many kind entreaties, when a single word from you would be enough, by way of command, to induce me, as you seem to wish, to give some account of my most remarkable adventures, in addition to what you have already heard of my travels in Africa. With the manners and customs of the people, as well as with their peculiar religious opinions, I believe you are now pretty well acquainted, insomuch that I no longer need to dwell upon these. You are aware that I have been a traveller from the time I was a boy of fifteen, when I set out from my native city of Genoa, in company with

* We are told by Mr. Dunlop that the incident of the monarch losing his way in the chase, is also related in the Fabliaux, as well as in many of the old English ballads, and probably had its origin in some adventure of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid. The tale of Bandello is the origin of *Le Roi et le Fermier*, of M. Sedaine.—*History of Fiction*, vol. iii. p. 461.

Messer Niccolo Cattanio, whose extensive mercantile connexions induced him to visit various parts of Barbary. With him I first arrived at the city of Orano, situated on the shores of the Mediterranean, and belonging to the kingdom of the same name. Numbers of the Genoese were accustomed to resort thither, and there is a large place of traffic, named from that circumstance the Lodge of the Genoese. My friend, Cattanio, was highly respected there, and even in great credit with the king; so much so as to have obtained various privileges from him, in consideration of the able and beneficial manner in which he promoted the commerce of his subjects. Residing there during several years, I acquired an excellent knowledge of the language, manners, and peculiar practices of the people, when I was at length prevailed upon to join a party of Oranese merchants, to whom I had been recommended, through Cattanio's influence, by their king. They were men of approved worth, and of the kindest manners, and with them I prepared to make a commercial tour through the country, visiting various regions of Africa, in which we discovered many great and populous cities. In several of these countries we met with seminaries of instruction, with their regular professors of different sciences, paid and appointed by the people.

There are, moreover, different hospitals instituted for the relief of the impoverished and distressed, who are there supplied with a regular subsistence, it being a principle of their religion to bestow alms, as pleasing in the sight of God. And I solemnly aver, that I have met with more instances of true charity and kindness from what are termed these uncivilized people, than I ever had the good fortune to do among those who are called Christians. Among other splendid places, I visited a noble city, built in the age of king Mansor, who had likewise been supreme pontifex, or high priest of Morocco. Some of their national chronicles were here exhibited to me, composed in the Arabic character, which bore ample witness to the diligence with which they record the most remarkable public events. Being very well versed in the language, I amused myself with perusing various portions of them; but more particularly those relating to the times of king Mansor. I thence learned that among other amusements he was immoderately fond of the chase; and it one day so happened, that being on a hunting excursion, he was surprised by a terrific storm, which, with irresistible fury, laying waste both corn and wood lands, soon dispersed his courtiers on all sides, in search of shelter. Mistaking his way, in the confusion which ensued, king Mansor, separated

at length from his companions, wandered through the forests until nightfall, and such was the tempestuous raging of the winds, that almost despairing of finding shelter, he checked his steed, doubtful which way he should venture to proceed. From the terrific darkness of the sky, relieved only by sheets of flashing light, shooting across the far horizon, he was fearful of going further, lest he should incur still greater danger, either by riding into pit-falls, or the deep marshes bordering the forest grounds. As he thus stood, listening to the distant thunder, and the raving of the storm, he stretched his view in vain, to discover some signs of human existence; until, on proceeding a few more steps, a light suddenly appeared, at only a short distance from him. It was from the window of a poor fisherman's hut, who earned his livelihood by catching eels in the adjacent pools and marshes. On hearing the voice of the king, who rushed forward with a shout of joy, on beholding a human habitation, the fisherman hastened to the assistance of the bewildered traveller, whom he believed to have lost his way in the storm. Inquiring who called, King Mansor approached near, and entreated him, if he possessed the least charity, to direct him the shortest path to the residence of the monarch. "The king's court," replied the poor man,

"is distant from this place above ten long miles."—"Yet I will make it worth your trouble, friend, to guide me thither; consent to oblige me, and you shall have no reason to complain," said the king. "Though you were King Mansor himself," returned the fisherman, "who entreated as much, I would not venture upon it at this hour of the night, and such a night as this is; for I should render myself guilty, perhaps, of leading our honoured monarch into destruction. The night is dark, and the waters are out around us."—"But why should you, friend, be so very solicitous about the safety of the king?"—"Oh," replied the good man, "because I honour him more than I do any one else, and love him more than myself."—"But what good has he ever done you?" asked the king, "that you should hold him in such high esteem. Methinks you would be rather more comfortably lodged and clothed, were you any extraordinary favourite of his."—"Not so," answered the fisherman; "for tell me, sir knight, what greater favour can I receive from my honoured king, in my humble sphere, than to be protected in the enjoyment of my house and goods, and the little earnings which I make? All I have I owe to his kindness, to the wisdom and justice with which he rules over his subjects, preserving us in peace or protecting us in war

from the inroads of the Arabs, as well as all other enemies. Even I, a poor fisherman, with a wife and little family, am not forgotten, and enjoy my poverty in peace. He permits me to fish for eels wherever I please, and take them afterwards to the best market I can find, in order to provide for my little ones. At any hour, night or day, I go out, or I come in, just as I like, to or fro, in my humble dwelling; and there is not a single person, in all these neighbouring woods and valleys, who has ever dared to do me wrong. To whom am I indebted for all this, but to him for whom I daily offer up my prayers to God and our holy prophet to watch over his preservation? But why do I talk, when I see you, sir knight, before me, dripping from the pelting of this pitiless storm? Deign to come within, and receive what shelter my poor cabin will afford; to-morrow I will conduct you to the king, or wherever else you please."

Mansor now freely availed himself of the invitation, and dismounting from his horse, sought refuge from the still raging storm. The poor steed, likewise, shared the accommodation prepared in a little out-house for the good man's ass, partaking of the corn and hay. Seated by the side of a good fire, the king was employed in drying himself, and recruiting his exhausted strength, while the wife was busily

cooking the eels for his royal supper. When they were served, having a decided distaste for fish, he somewhat anxiously inquired, whether there was no kind of meat for which he might exchange them? The fisherman very honestly declared, that it was true he had a she-goat with a kid; and perceiving that his guest was no unworthy personage, he directly offered to serve it up to table; which having done, he presented the king with those parts generally esteemed the best and the most delicious. After supper, the monarch retiring to his rustic couch, reposed his wearied limbs, and slumbered until the sun was up.

At the appointed hour he once more mounted his steed, attended by his kind host, who now took upon himself the office of a guide. They had scarcely proceeded beyond the confines of the marshes, when they encountered several of the king's party, calling aloud in the utmost anxiety, and searching for their royal master in every direction. Unbounded was the joy and congratulation of the courtiers on thus meeting with him safe and uninjured. The king then turning round to the poor fisherman, informed him that he was the monarch whom he had so much praised, and whom he had so humanely and honourably received the foregoing evening: and that

he might rely upon him, that his singular courtesy and good-will should not go unrewarded.

Now there were certain hunting-lodges which the king had erected in those parts for the convenience which they afforded in his excursions : and several of his nobles had likewise adorned the surrounding country with various seats and other dwellings, so as to give a pleasing relief to the prospect. With the view of bestowing a handsome remuneration upon the good fisherman, the grateful monarch gave orders that the pools and marshes adjacent to these dwellings should be drained. He then circumscribed the limits of a noble city, comprehending the palaces and houses already erected, and after conferring upon it various rich immunities, by which it shortly became both very populous and powerful, he named the place *Cesar Elcabir*, or the Great Palace, and presented it as a token of his gratitude to the honest fisherman.

At the period when his sons succeeded to it, no city throughout the king's dominions was to be compared with it, in point of splendour and beauty of appearance. During the time I remained there, it was filled with merchants and artisans of every description. The mosques were extremely grand, nor were the colleges and hospitals less worthy of admiration. As they have but few good wells, the cisterns and

other public conduits are very large and numerous. The inhabitants of the places I visited are in general liberal and kind-hearted men, of simple manners, and neat and plain in their dress and appearance. The gardens are at once spacious and beautiful, abounding in all kinds of fruits, which supply a weekly market, the emporium of all the surrounding country. It is situated not above eighteen miles distant from Azella, now called Arzilla, in the possession of the Portuguese.

Now, simple as the whole of this story may appear, it will at least be found to inculcate one beautiful moral; it teaches us to behave with courtesy towards every one, courtesy being like virtue, its own reward, and sure of meeting, sooner or later, as in the instance of the poor fisherman, that reward here below.

PART III. NOVELLA X.

IN the castle of Moncaliero, not far from the city of Turin, there dwelt a widow lady of the name of Zilia Duca, whose consort died before she had attained her twenty-fourth year. Though extremely beautiful, her manners were somewhat abrupt, resembling rather those of a pretty rustic, than of a polished city dame. She devoted herself to the education and future welfare of an only son, between three and four years old, and relinquished all idea of again entering into the marriage state. Entertaining somewhat narrow and avaricious views, she kept as small an establishment as she could, and performed many menial offices, usually left to the management of domestics. She rarely received or returned visits; stealing out on the appointed fasts early in the morning to attend mass at an adjoining church, and returning home in the same private manner. Now it was a general custom with the ladies in that part of the world, whenever strangers happened to arrive at their residence, to grant them a salute, by way of welcome to their roof. But the lady of whom we speak, proved for once an exception to this general and hospitable

rule. For Messer Filiberto da Virle, a gentleman and a soldier of distinguished prowess and esteem, stopping at Moncaliero, on his way to Virle, chanced also to attend mass at the same church where Madonna Zilia was to be seen. Charmed with her graceful and attractive air, no less than with the beauty of her countenance, he eagerly inquired who she was; and though little pleased with the avaricious character which he heard attributed to her, he tried in vain to efface the impression she had made. He pursued, however, his journey to Virle, where, after transacting his affairs, he resolved to retrace his steps to Moncaliero, not very far distant, and take up his residence there for some time. With this view he took a house not far from the castle, availing himself of every opportunity of throwing himself into the lady's way, and resolved at all risks, and whatever might be the labour, to induce her to relinquish the unsociable conduct of which she was accused.

After feasting his eyes long and vainly in her sight, he, at length, contrived to obtain the pleasure of an introduction; but she had scarcely spoken two words to him, when she excused herself, and retreated, as usual, home. In truth she had been short with him, and he felt it in such a way, that he made a strong resolution, which he almost as suddenly broke, of

renouncing all thoughts of her for ever. He next enlisted some of her own sex, among her most intimate acquaintance, to employ their influence with her, to vanquish her obduracy, in order that, after having carried the outworks, he might take the castle of Moncaliero by storm. But the enemy was on the alert, and all his efforts proved abortive. He looked, he sighed, he wrote, he went to mass, he walked before and behind the castle, in the woods, by the river side, where he threatened to drown himself; but the lady's heart was more impregnable than a rock, harder than every thing except his own fate; for she deigned neither to smile upon, nor to write to him. What should the wretched lover do? He had already lost his appetite, his complexion, and his rest, besides his heart; and really felt very unwell. Though physicians were not the persons to prescribe for such a case, they were nevertheless called in, and made him a great deal worse; for he was now rapidly advancing towards that bourne, from which neither lovers nor travellers return; and without other help, it became very evident that the poor young gentleman would soon give up the ghost.

While his life hung suspended in this languishing state, one of his friends and fellow officers, a happy

fellow from Spoleto, hearing of his condition, came posting to his succour, determined at least to be in time for his funeral, and see that all due military honours were paid to his loving spirit. When he arrived, Messer Filiberto had just strength enough to tell the story of his love, and the cruel disdain of the lady, intending afterwards, as he assured his friend, to think no more about it, but quietly to expire. His friend, however, having really a regard for him, and believing he would grow wiser as he grew older, strongly dissuaded him from the latter alternative, observing that he ought to think about it; that it was a point of honour, on which he ought to pique himself, to bring it, like a good comedy, to a happy conclusion. "My poor Filiberto," he continued, "leave the affair to me, and be assured you shall speak to her as much as you please."—"That is all I wish," exclaimed the patient, with a little more animation, while a slight colour suffused his cheek; "persuade her only to listen to me, and, trust me, I can manage the rest myself. But it is all a deception. What can you do, when I have wasted all kinds of love messages, gifts, oaths, and promises, in vain?"—"Do you get well; that is all you have to do," returned our Spoletino, "and leave the rest to me." He spoke with so much confidence that the

patient in a short time grew wonderfully better ; and when the physician a few days afterwards stepped in, he gave himself infinite credit for the improvement which had taken place. Now the reader must know, that the wits of Spoleto are renowned all over Italy ; they are the most loose-tongued rattlers, the most diligent petitioners for alms, in the name of St. Antony ; the most audacious, and slight-of-hand gentry in the world. They have a very excellent gift of talking, and making something out of nothing ; and no less of persuading people to be of their own opinion, almost against their will. Nearly the whole of that amusing generation, who are in the habit of getting through the world, by easing the rich and the simple of their superfluous cash, who dance upon two poles, dole out the grace of Saint Paul, charm the dancing serpents, or sing wicked songs in the public streets, will be found to trace their birth to Spoleto.

Messer Filiberto's friend was well qualified, therefore, as a relation of these itinerant wits, to assist a brother in distress ; especially in such a dilemma as that in which our hero found himself. Considering him, at length, sufficiently convalescent, our Spoletino fixed upon a sort of travelling pedlar, to forward the designs he had formed for the relief of

the unhappy lover. Bribing him to exchange dresses, he took possession, for a period, of his collection of wares, consisting of every article most tempting to a woman's eyes, either for ornament or for use. Thus armed, he set out in the direction of Donna Zilia's residence, announcing himself as the old travelling merchant, with a fresh supply of the choicest goods. These tidings reaching the ears of the lady, she sent to desire him to call at her house, which he directly entered with the utmost familiarity, as if by no means for the first time, and addressed her in the most courteous language he could command. Then opening his treasures, she entered upon a review of the whole assortment, displacing and undervaluing every thing, while she purchased nothing. At length, fixing her eyes upon some beautiful veils and ribbons, of which she fancied she was in want, she inquired how much he expected for such very ordinary articles? "If you will sell them, good man, for what they are really worth, I will take no less than five-and-thirty yards; but if you ask too much, I will not look at them, I will not have a single ell."—"My lady," replied the false merchant, "do my veils indeed please you? They are at your service, and say nothing as to the price; it is already paid. And not only these, but the whole of this excellent assort-

ment is your own, if you will but deign to receive it."—"No, no, not so," cried the lady, "that would not be right; I thank you, good man; though I certainly should like to have them at as low a rate as I can. So ask what you please, and I will give what I please, and then we shall understand one another: you gain your livelihood in this way, and surely it would be cruel, however much I might wish it, to take them for nothing. So deal fairly with me, and I will give you what I think the goods are really worth."—"But, your ladyship, please you," replied the wary merchant, "I shall consider it no loss, but a favour, if you will condescend to receive them, under no conditions at all. And I am sure, if you possess as courteous a mind as your face betokens, you will accept these trifles, presented to you on the part of one, who would gladly lay down, not only his whole property, but his life at your feet." At these words the lady, "blushing celestial rosy red," eyed the merchant keenly for a moment; "I am astonished to hear you talk thus; and I insist upon knowing who you really are. There is some mystery in all this, and I am rather inclined to think you must have mistaken the person to whom you speak." The merchant, however, not in the least abashed, being a native of Spoleto, acquainted her in the mildest and most flattering

terms, with the long and passionate attachment entertained for her by poor Messer Filiberto, and the delicacy with which he had concealed it until the very last. Handsome, accomplished, rich, and powerful, he was prepared to lay all his extensive seignories at her feet, and account himself the most fortunate of mankind. In short, he pleaded so eloquently, and played his part so well, that she at length, after a pretty long resistance, consented to see his friend. He then hastened back to Messer Filiberto, who overwhelmed him with the most rapturous thanks, and lost no time in preparing to pay a visit to his beloved, who received him at the appointed hour in the drawing-room of her own house. There was a single maid-servant in her company, who sat at work in a recess, so that she could scarcely overhear their discourse.

Bending lowly before her, Messer Filiberto expressed his deep sense of the honour she had conferred on him, and proceeded in impassioned terms to relate the origin and progress of his affection, his almost unexampled sufferings, and the sole hope which still rendered his life supportable to him. He further assured her, that his gratitude would be eternal; in proportion to the amount of the obligations under which she laid him. The sole reply which he received to

his repeated and earnest protestations, was, that she was resolved to remain faithful to the memory of her departed consort, and devote herself to the education of her only son. She was, moreover, grateful for his good opinion, though she was sure he could not fail to meet with ladies far more beautiful and more worthy of his regard. Finding that all his efforts proved quite fruitless, and that it was impossible to make any impression, he threw himself once more at her feet, with tears in his eyes, declaring that, if she possessed the cruelty to deprive him of all hope, he should not long survive. The lady remained silent; and Messer Filiberto then summoning his utmost pride and fortitude to his aid, prepared to take his leave; beseeching her only in the common courtesy and hospitality of the country, to grant him in return for his long love and sufferings, a single kiss, which, against all social laws, she had before denied him; although it was generally yielded to all strangers who entered an hospitable roof. "I wish," replied Donna Zilia, "I knew whether your affection for me is so strong as you pretend, for then, if you will but take a vow to observe one thing, I will grant what you require. I shall then believe I am truly beloved, but never till then." The lover eagerly swore to observe the conditions she should impose,

and seized the price of the promise he had given. "Now, Signor Filiberto," exclaimed the lady, "prepare to execute the cruel sentence I shall impose. It is my will and pleasure that you no longer trouble me with such entreaties for the future, at least for some time; and if you are a true knight, you will not again unseal your lips for the space of three years." The lover was greatly surprised and shocked, on hearing so harsh and unjust a sentence; though at the same time, he signified his submission by his silence, merely nodding his assent. Soon after, making the lady a low bow, he took his departure for his own residence. There, taking the affair into his most serious consideration, he at last came to the fixed resolution of submitting to this very severe penalty, as a punishment, at least, for his folly, in so lightly sporting with his oath. Suddenly, then, he became dumb, and feigning that he had met with some accident, he set out from Moncaliero, on his return to Virle. His friends, on finding him in this sad condition, expressed the utmost sorrow and surprise; but, as he retained his usual cheerfulness, and sense enough to conduct his own affairs, they corresponded with him as well as if he had retained the nine parts of speech. Committing his affairs to the conduct of his steward, a distant relation, in whom he had the highest confi-

dence, he determined to set out on a tour for France, to beguile, if possible, the irksomeness of his situation. Of an extremely handsome person, and possessing noble and imposing manners, the misfortune under which he appeared to labour was doubly regretted, wherever our hero made his appearance.

About the period of his arrival in France, Charles, the seventh of that name, was engaged in a warm and sanguinary war against the English, attempting to recover possession of the dominions which his predecessors had lost. Having already driven them from Gascony and other parts, he was busily preparing to follow up his successes in Normandy. On arriving at this sovereign's court, Messer Filiberto had the good fortune to find several of his friends among the barons and cavaliers in the king's service, from whom he experienced a very kind reception, which was rather enhanced by their knowledge of the cruel misfortune under which he laboured. But as it was not of such a nature as to incapacitate him for battle, he made signs that he wished to enter into the king's body guards; and being a knight of well known prowess, this resolution was much applauded, no less by his majesty than by all his friends. Having equipped himself in a suitable manner, he accompanied a division of the army intended to carry Rouen by

assault. Here he performed such feats of strength and heroic valour in the presence of the king, as to excite the greatest admiration; and on the third attack the place was carried by storm. His majesty afterwards inquiring more particularly into the history of the valiant knight, and learning that he was one of the lords of Virle, in Piedmont, instantly conferred upon him an office in his royal household, and presented him with a large sum of money as an encouragement to persevere in the noble career he had commenced, observing at the same time, that he trusted some of his physicians would be enabled to remove the impediment in his speech. Our hero, smiling at this observation, expressed his gratitude for these royal favours as well as he could; shaking his fist at the same time, in token that he would punish his majesty's adversaries. Soon after, a sharp skirmish occurred between the French and the enemy for the possession of a bridge. The affair becoming serious, and the trumpets sounding to arms, the king, in order to encourage his troops, galloped towards the spot: Talbot, the commander of the English forces, was already there, and had nearly obtained possession of the bridge. His majesty was in the act of encouraging his soldiers; when Messer Filiberto, on his black charger, passed him at full

speed with his company. With his lance in rest, he rode full at the horse of Talbot, which fell to the ground. Then seizing his huge club, and followed by his companions, he made such terrible havoc among the English, that, dealing death in every blow, he shortly dispersed them on all sides, and compelled them to abandon their position on the bridge. It was with difficulty that their commander himself effected his escape; while king Charles, following up his success, in a short time obtained possession of the whole of Normandy.

On this occasion the king returned public thanks to the heroic Filiberto, and in the presence of all the first nobility of his kingdom, invested him with the command of several castles, with a hundred men at arms to attend him. He now stood so high in favour at court, that the monarch spared no expense to obtain the first professional advice that could be found in every country, with the hope of restoring him to the use of speech; and, after holding a solemn tournament in honour of the French victories, he proclaimed a reward of ten thousand francs to be paid to any physician, or other person, who should be fortunate enough to discover the means of restoring the use of speech to a dumb cavalier, who had lost his voice in a single night. The fame of this reward reaching as far

as Italy, many adventurers, induced by the hope of gain, sallied forth to try their skill, however vainly, since it was impossible to make him speak against his will. Incensed at observing such a concourse of people at his court, under the pretence of performing experiments on the dumb gentleman, until the whole capitol became infested with quacks, his majesty ordered a fresh proclamation to go forth, stating, that whoever undertook to effect the cure, should thenceforth, in case of failing to perform what he promised, be put to death, unless he paid down the sum of ten thousand francs. The good effect of this regulation was quickly perceived, in the diminution of pretenders to infallible cures, few caring to risk their fortunes or their lives, in case of their inability to pay, though they had before been so liberal of their reputation: When the tidings of Messer Filiberto's good fortune and favour at the French king's court reached Moncaliero, Donna Zilia, imagining that his continued silence must be solely owing to the vow he had taken, and the time being at length nearly expired, fancied it would be no very bad speculation to secure the ten thousand francs for herself. Not doubting but that his love remained still warm and constant, and that she really possessed the art of removing the dumbness at her pleasure, she resolved

to lose no time in setting off directly for Paris, where she was introduced to the commissioners appointed to preside over Messer Filiberto's case. "I am come, my lords," she observed, "hearing that a gentleman of the court has for some time past lost his speech, to restore to him that invaluable faculty, possessing for that purpose some secret remedies, which I trust will prove efficacious. In the course of a fortnight he will probably be one of the most eloquent men at court; and I am quite willing to run the risk of the penalty, if I perform not my engagement as required. There must, however, be no witness to my proceedings; the patient must be entrusted entirely to me. I should not like every pretender to obtain a knowledge of the secret I possess; it is one which will require the utmost art in its application." Rejoiced to hear her speak with so much confidence on the subject, the commissioners immediately despatched a message to Messer Filiberto, informing him that a lady had just arrived from Piedmont, boasting that she could perform what the most learned of the faculty in France had failed to do, by restoring the dumb to speech. The answer to this, was an invitation to wait upon our hero at his own residence, when he recognized the cruel beauty who had imposed so severe a penance, and concluded at the same time that she had under-

taken the journey, not out of any affection for him, but with the most mercenary views. Reflecting on his long sufferings and unrequited affection, his love was suddenly converted into a strong desire of revenge: he therefore came to a determination of still playing the mute, and not deigning to exchange a single word with her, merely bowed to her politely at a distance. After some moments' silence, the lady, finding that he had no inclination to speak, inquired in a gentle tone whether he was at a loss to discover in whose company he was? He gave her to understand that he knew her perfectly well, but that he had not yet recovered his speech, motioning, at the same time, with his fingers towards his mouth. On this she informed him that she now absolved him from his vow, that she had travelled to Paris for that purpose, and that he might talk as much as he pleased. But the dumb lover, only motioning his thanks, still continued as silent as before; until the lady, losing all patience, very freely expressed her disappointment and displeasure. Still it availed her nothing, and fearful of the consequences to herself, if he persisted in his unaccountable obstinacy, she had at length recourse to caresses and concessions, which, whatever advantage he chose to take of them, proved ultimately as fruitless to restore his eloquence, as every other

means. The tears and prayers of the lady, to prevail upon him to speak, became now doubly clamorous; while she sorely repented her former cruelty and folly, which had brought her into the predicament of forfeiting either ten thousand francs or her life. She would immediately have been placed under a military guard, had it not been for the intercession of the dumb gentleman, who made signs that they should desist. The penalty, however, was to be enforced; but the lady, being of an excessively avaricious turn, resolved rather to die than to furnish the prescribed sum, and thus deprive her beloved boy of a portion of his inheritance. When reduced to this extremity, Messer Filiberto, believing that upon the whole he had sufficiently revenged himself, took compassion upon her sufferings, and hastened to obtain an audience of the king. He entreated as a special favour, that his majesty would remit the fine, and grant liberty to her, as well as to some other debtors, which, in the utmost surprise at hearing the sound of his voice, the king promised to do. He then proceeded to inform his majesty of the whole history of his attachment to the lady, and the strange results by which it had been attended to both parties, though fortunately all had ended well. Messer Filiberto then hastened to hold an audience with the lady, seriously proposing to give her

a little good advice ; and she was quite as much rejoiced as his majesty, when she first heard him speak. " You may recollect, madam," he observed, " that some time ago, when at Moncaliero, I expressed the most ardent and constant attachment to you ; an attachment which I did not then think that time could have ever diminished. But your conduct in cheating me into the vow of silence, and your cruelty to me, as well before that time as since, have wrought a complete change in my sentiments towards you. I have acquired wealth and honours ; I stand high in the favour of my monarch ; and having, I think, taken ample revenge upon you, by the fears and trouble you have experienced, I have not only granted you your liberty and your life, but ordered you to be freely supplied with every convenience and facility for your return-home. I need not advise you to conduct yourself in future with care and prudence ; in all the economical virtues you are reputed to be unrivalled ; but I would venture to hint, that from the example I have in this instance afforded you, you will be more cautious how you sport with the feelings of those who love you, as it is an old saying, that the wily are often taken in their own nets." He then provided her with an honourable escort, and money to defray her expenses ; while he himself, not long after,

received the hand of a young beauty of the court, bestowed upon him by his royal master. By this union he received an accession of several castles and domains, and sent for his witty young friend from Spoleto, to share with him a portion of his prosperity. Still retaining his favour at court, upon the death of Charles VII., he continued to enjoy the same appointments, and the same influence, under Lewis XI. his successor.

THIRD PART, NOVELLA XXXIX.

IN the time of Lodovico Sforza, the unfortunate Duke of Milan, there was kept, among other living curiosities in the ducal palace, a large and beautiful ape, whose amusing yet harmless manners, full of practical jests and witticisms, had long obtained for him the liberty of going at large. Such indeed was his reputation for prudence and good conduct, that he was not merely permitted the range of the whole palace, but frequently visited the outskirts, in the vicinity of Maine, of Cusano, and San Giovanni, and was not unfrequently seen conversing with some friend upon the walls. In fact most people were eager to shew their respect for him by presenting him with fruits and other dainties, no less from regard to his ducal patron, than to his own intrinsic merits. The singular pleasure he afforded to all classes of society, by his happy talents of various kinds, was always a sufficient passport from place to place. But his favourite resort, among many others, was the house of an ancient gentlewoman, situated in the parish of San Giovanni, upon the walls; where he cultivated the society of her two sons, one of

whom in particular, though at the head of a family, invariably received his monkey guest in the most amiable manner, making him as much at home as if he had been the lady's favourite lap-dog. These young men, perceiving their aged mother amused with the animal's unequalled exhibitions of his art, vied with each other in paying the most gratifying attentions to his monkeyship; and would certainly, had he not happened to have been ducal property, either have purchased or stolen him, merely out of regard to their mother. The whole household, likewise, received orders to treat him with the same invariable kindness and respect, studying what appeared most agreeable to his taste, so as to give him an affection for the old lady's house. This last motive weighed so greatly with his apeship, that he almost deserted his other neighbours, in order to enjoy more of the society of these very agreeable friends; although he was careful to return to his own ducal residence at the castle in the evening. During this time the aged lady becoming very infirm, no longer left her chamber, where she was affectionately attended by her whole family, who supplied her with every alleviation in the power of medical advice to bestow. Thither, occasionally, our facetious hero was also introduced for the purpose of awakening

a smile on the wan features of the patient, by his strange and amusing manners, receiving some delicate morsels in return from the poor lady's own hand. As he possessed a natural taste, in common with most of his race, for every kind of sweets, he was in the habit of besieging the old lady's room with great perseverance and assiduity, feasting upon the best confectionary with far higher zest than the poor patient herself. Worn out at length, by long infirmities and age, she soon after departed this world, having first with becoming piety confessed herself, and received the holy sacraments of our church, with the communion and extreme unction at the final close.

While the funeral ceremonies were preparing, and the last offices rendered to the deceased, the monkey appeared to pay remarkable attention to all that was going forward. The corpse being dressed, and placed on the funeral bier, the holy sisterhood then attended with the usual ceremonies, offering up hymns and aves to the Virgin for the soul of the deceased. The body was afterwards borne to the parish church not far distant, not unobserved by the monkey, who watched the procession depart. But he soon turned his attention to the state of things around him ; and after feasting on the cake and wine,

being a little elevated, he began to empty the boxes and drawers, and examine the contents. Having observed the deceased in her last habiliments, and the form of her head-dress when she was laid out, the facetious ape immediately began to array himself in the cast-off garments, exactly in the manner he had witnessed ; and so perfect was the resemblance, that when he had covered himself up in bed, the physician himself would have been puzzled to detect the cheat. Here the false patient lay, when the domestics entered the chamber ; and suddenly perceiving the monkey thus dexterously laid out, they ran back in the utmost terror and surprise, believing that they had really seen either the corpse or the spirit of the deceased. After recovering sufficient presence of mind to speak, they declared, as they hoped to be saved, that they had seen their mistress reposing upon her sick couch as usual. On the return of the two brothers with their friends and relatives from church, they directly resolved to ascend in a body into the sick chamber ; and night already approaching, they all felt, in spite of their affected indifference, an unpleasant sensation on entering the room. Drawing near the bed-side, they not only fancied they saw and heard a person breathe, but observing the co-

verings move, as if the patient were about to spring from the couch, they retreated with the utmost precipitation and alarm. When they had recovered their spirits a little, the guests requested that a priest might be sent for, to whom, on his arrival, they proceeded to explain the case. On hearing the nature of it, the good friar, being of a truly prudent and pious turn, despatched a person back for his clerk, with orders to bring him the large ivory crucifix, and the illuminated psalter. These, with the help of holy water, the wafer, and the priest's stole, were judged a sufficient match for the devices of the Evil One; and thus armed, repeating the seven psalms, with due ejaculations to the Virgin, they once more ascended the stairs, the clerk, in obedience to the friar, bearing the huge ivory crucifix at their head. He had previously exhorted the brothers to have no fears for the final salvation of their parent, as the number and excellence of her confessions were an effectual preservative against the most diabolical efforts of the adversary. He maintained that there was not the least cause for alarm, for what the servants had beheld were merely Satanic illusions, which he had frequently been in the habit of dispelling with singular success; and that having made use of his exorcisms, he would then bless the house, and

with the Lord's help, lay such a curse upon the bad spirits, as would deprive them of the least inclination to return.

When they arrived at the chamber-door, all the guests, in spite of these encouraging exhortations and the sprinkling of holy water, drew back, while the bold friar ordered his clerk to advance in the name of the Lord; which he did, followed only by his superior. Approaching the sick bed, they perceived Monna Bertuccia, our facetious ape, laid out as we have said, in perfect personification of the deceased. After mumbling some prayers, and flourishing the cross in vain, for some time, they began to entertain doubts of their success, though at the same time they felt ashamed to retreat. So sprinkling the holy water with a more liberal hand, crying: "*Asperges me, domine; asperges me;*" they complimented the ape with a portion of it in his face. Expecting upon this to be next saluted with a blow of the huge cross, he suddenly began to grin and chatter in so horrible a manner, that the sacred vessel fell from the priest's hands, and the clerk at the same time dropping the crucifix, they both fled together. Such was their haste, that they stumbled, one over the other, down the stairs, the priest falling upon his clerk, when they reached the bottom.

On hearing the sudden crash, and the terrified exclamations of the good friar, "*Jesus, Jesus, Domine, adjuva me,*" the brothers, followed by the rest of the party, rushed towards the spot, eagerly inquiring what dreadful accident had occurred. Both of the holy personages gazed on the guests, without being able to utter a word; but their pallid looks spoke volumes sufficient to answer all demands. The poor clerk fainted away, no less from excess of fear than from the terrible fall he had just received. Having obliged both to partake of some restoratives, the priest at length summoned courage enough to say: "It is true, my dear children, I have indeed seen your poor departed mother in the form of a fierce demon;" when just as he had finished these words, the cause of all their disturbance, desirous of securing the remnants of the feast, was heard approaching at a pretty brisk and clattering pace down the unlucky stairs. Without giving any of the party time to discover a fresh place of refuge, or even to prepare their minds for his reception, he bounced suddenly into the room, armed cap-à-pie, in the fearful petticoats of the deceased. His head was dressed to a nicety exactly in the same manner as the old lady's, and his whole body very decently arrayed in her late habiliments. He placed himself in the midst of the

company, all of whom stood rooted to the spot, silent and awe-stricken, awaiting the dreadful scene that might ensue. The wrinkles in his countenance certainly bore no small resemblance to those in the features of the deceased, to which his very serious demeanour added not a little. Yet after a few secret ejaculations for divine protection on the part of the guests, the facetious visitor was soon recognized by one of the brothers, the only person who had possessed courage to look the monkey in the face, on his sudden entrance into the room. Momentary prayers and exclamations were then as suddenly converted into bursts of laughter; and in a few minutes, the author of all their sufferings began to resume the usual hilarity of his disposition, to exhibit his best manœuvres in the saltic art, and with the greatest politeness, severally to accost the company. He evinced, however, the utmost aversion to disrobing himself of his new honours, snapping at any one who ventured to approach him, while he performed his antics in the ablest and most whimsical manner. In full dress he thus set out on his return to the castle, meeting with reiterated plaudits, as he passed along the streets. In this state, he was welcomed home by the domestics of the castle, producing infinite diversion among the courtiers, and all those who witnessed his ex-

ploits. Nor did the two brothers punish him for his involuntary fault; rather kindly permitting him to return to his old haunts, where he feasted and frolicked away his days, until he attained to a happy and respectable old age.

FOURTH PART, NOVELLA XVIII.

DURING the period of my captivity among the Turks, which continued more than forty years, I was conducted by different masters into various places, more especially throughout Greece, whose most rich and beautiful regions are subjected to the Mahometan sway. It was there that I met with an instance, which may be enumerated with advantage amongst the most celebrated stories on record, of the courageous conduct of noble ladies, at different periods of history. The incident, of which I am about to speak, arose out of the siege of Coccino, situated in the island of Lemnos, invaded at that time by the Turkish armament from the Egean sea. Having in vain attempted to storm Lepanto, all the efforts of the infidels were now directed against the walls of Coccino, which were battered with such united strength and fury, that one of the chief gates at length falling with a loud crash, the Turks rushed exultingly forward to secure their entrance. This was as bravely disputed by the Venetian soldiers, assisted by the inhabitants, and even by the women of the place, who vied with each other in risking their lives, in order

to avoid the outrages of the Mahometan soldiery. There was a certain warrior named Demetrius, a native of the town, who distinguished himself on this occasion above all his comrades, by the fearless valour with which he confronted the fiercest of the enemy. Standing the very foremost man, and hurling the infidels back from the gate with incredible strength and prowess, the gateway was already half-blocked up with the slain, and he still continued to exhort his countrymen to the fight, until, pierced with a thousand wounds, he fell upon the dead bodies of his enemies.

Among the women who displayed the courage of the bravest warriors, was a daughter of this hero, who, in the act of encouraging the soldiers to follow to her father's rescue, witnessed his fall. She was of a noble and imposing figure, and though only in her twentieth year, evinced the utmost fortitude under the perils which surrounded her. Her name was Marulla, and she was no less strikingly beautiful than intrepidly courageous. Instead of yielding herself up to lamentations and despair, on beholding the heroic fate of her sire, she exhorted his fellow-citizens to revenge his death, and, seizing his sword, led them forward with increased energy to the attack. With the rage of a hungry lioness, springing upon a herd of cattle, she fell upon the nearest of her foes,

dealing death on all sides, in the name and with the spirit of her father. In the enthusiasm of the moment, numbers of her own sex, following her example, encouraged the soldiers to make fresh exertions ; and such was the impression produced by this conduct that the invaders were speedily overpowered, and driven to take refuge in their ships. Those who had not the good fortune to escape, were indiscriminately put to the sword, and thus, by the heroic example of a single woman, the chief city and the whole island of Lemnos were relieved from the invasion of the infidels. I was myself told by their commander Morsbecco, one of their most able and distinguished captains, during the time I was a prisoner at Constantinople, when he was giving an account of this desperate engagement, that as soon as he beheld the Grecian heroine rushing amidst the thickest of his troops, he felt as if all his former courage and confidence had forsaken him ; a circumstance which he never recollected to have happened to him, during the numerous battles and campaigns in which he had been engaged. On the liberation of the island, Antonio Loredano, the Venetian admiral, arriving with a strong force, and hearing of the extraordinary exploits of the maiden Marulla, immediately requested to be introduced to her, when he expressed the great-

est admiration, both of her conversation and appearance. In presence of the Venetian soldiers and the citizens of Coccino, he next bestowed the highest praises on her unequalled generosity and heroism, her filial affection and other virtues, for all of which she was so proudly distinguished. He then presented her with several rich gifts on the part of the republic, and his example was immediately followed by the commanders of the different galleys, and by the people of the island, who vied with each other in laying their contributions at her feet. When more than sufficient for a handsome marriage portion had been collected, the admiral proceeded to address the young heroine in the following words : " Most excellent and noble lady, in order to convince you of the sincerity with which our Venetian senate is ever inclined to honour real worth, in whichever sex it may be found, and to display its gratitude for the obligations conferred upon it, I have here offered you these slight tokens of its regard. Deign to accept them as an earnest only of higher rewards, when I shall have forwarded to our noble senators a more particular account of the splendid actions you have performed in defence of their territories, and of the country to which you owe your birth. In the mean time, bright and beautiful as you are brave, should

you deign to cast your eye on the first and proudest of your countrymen, who have combated at your side, be assured that he will feel himself honoured by such a preference, and that his interests will be nobly promoted by our senate of Venice!"

In returning her grateful thanks to the admiral and the Venetian republic, for the generous consideration of her poor services, the maiden heroine, in reference to the last article of their proposals, replied, that high as she estimated true bravery, it was by no means superior physical courage and daring deeds in man which constituted his highest claims to her regard. These, without the still nobler attributes of an intellectual and moral character, were nearly worthless in her eyes; when destitute of those virtues which embellish an unstained and upright life, and produce great and honourable actions.

Repeated plaudits and commendations from all ranks of people, immediately followed this truly noble and beautiful reply; the admiral afterwards declaring, that the innate worth and wisdom exhibited in her language and demeanour, had not merely surpassed his expectations, but deserved to be compared with the happiest instances of feminine excellence and accomplishments, recorded in the annals either of Greece or Rome.

An accurate and eloquent account of the whole of this interesting scene was shortly after despatched to the noble senators of Venice, who entering upon a consideration of the singular merits of their fair champion, not only decreed that her espousals should be splendidly provided for, and celebrated by the republic, but that numerous privileges and exemptions from the public burdens imposed upon her fellow subjects, should be likewise secured to her and to her children for evermore.

Novels of Francesco Sansobino.



FRANCESCO SANSOVINO.

THIS novelist was the son of the distinguished sculptor and architect, Jacopo Sansovino; and was born at Rome in the year 1521. Pope Julius III. is said to have officiated as his sponsor, at the sacred font. He was first brought up to the profession of the law; but as he had no inclination for that study, he made but little progress in it, and is supposed to have soon after relinquished it upon his marriage, when he took up his residence in Venice, where he lived till the year 1586. He there produced many of his novels, and devoted himself altogether to literary labours and pursuits. He was a voluminous writer, which, however, by no means atones for the want of genuine merit, a failing, of which he has, not without justice, been accused; his tales affording few specimens worthy of selection. Their want of originality is one of the least faults ascribed to them, inasmuch as he has been charged with having mutilated and disguised his borrowed subjects in the most uncere- monious manner. The best claim that writers of this description have upon our notice, (and, it must be

allowed, there are too many such among the Italian novelists,) consists in the copious materials with which they supply the critic, whose delightful task it is to detect, by long and minute labours, a few rare gems, sparkling amidst a mass of inferior productions.

The character of Sansovino, as a writer, has been very fairly appreciated by Apostolo Zeno, in his learned annotations to the well known *Biblioteca Italiana* of Fontanini. He there observes, that a great number of the stories inserted in Sansovino's collection as his own, are obviously to be referred to the *Decameron* of Boccaccio; and that he has, likewise, taken frequent liberties with those of Bandello, without noticing the name of that author; though many other writers are mentioned in the list of authors whom he has adduced, as supplying the materials of his work. Still, Sansovino is by no means a solitary instance of the predatory genius of the novelists of the sixteenth century, indulged at the expense of the earlier and better writers of Italy. Nor, while La Fontaine and other French writers, as well as our English dramatists, drew so largely from the same source, do we see any cogent reason why the Italians themselves should not be allowed to enjoy a reciprocal traffic in their own national productions.

FRANCESCO SANSOVINO.

SEVENTH DAY, NOVELLA VI.

OTTO, the third emperor of that name, on his return from Rome, where he had just been invested with the imperial dignity by the reigning pontiff, Gregory V., touched at Florence on his way to his German dominions. The whole of Tuscany, then under the imperial sway, was committed to the government of Ugone, Marquess of Brandenburg, cousin-german to the emperor, a man of approved reputation, and esteemed for his love of justice by all ranks of people. Now it happened, during the emperor's stay, that the festival of San Giovanni, the Baptist, the tutelary saint of Florence, was every where celebrated throughout the city, and the concourse of guests at the palace was likewise very great. Among these, the emperor was particularly struck with a beautiful young lady, daughter to a gentleman of the name of Berti dei Ravignani. She was esteemed the most lovely and accomplished maiden, not only in Florence, but throughout all Tuscany. The eyes of the company

were frequently rivetted upon her, and those of the emperor never once wandered from her face. Such was the impression he received, that, unable to detect the least fault in her face or form, and charmed with the sweetness of her manners, he gave way to the most unbounded admiration, in spite of the restraints imposed upon him by his birth and station. The more he gazed, and the more he conversed with her, the deeper sunk the emotions he began to entertain ; until, at the close of the festival, on taking his leave of her, he returned to his own palace silent and unhappy ; his whole soul absorbed in the recollection of the exquisite charms, both of mind and person, of the lady he had just seen. Such influence over him did this passion at length assume, that so far from being able to extirpate it, he could no longer disguise his feelings ; and doubtful only in what manner to proceed, he resolved to consult one of the most prudent gentlemen of his bedchamber. To him he committed the task of obtaining further particulars concerning the beloved object ; giving him, at the same time, proper instructions, by which he might discover her. In this manner he shortly became acquainted with her father's name, and the whole genealogy of her family. The gentleman was of a good extraction, but in somewhat confined circumstances,

and by no means of a disposition, either by his industry or his wit, to improve them.

Scorning the idea of acting in any way either artfully or dishonourably, yet being determined to pursue his object, the emperor resolved to hint the affair to the lady's father through his confidant, and proceed throughout the whole transaction, both with regard to the father and the daughter, candidly and openly. With this view, having learned that his mission to Messer Berti, owing to the expectations of wealth and influence which it excited in his mind, had met with a favourable reception, the emperor invited him to his royal table; and lavishing upon him every mark of attention, soon entered into familiar discourse, though without alluding, in the most distant manner, to the subject nearest his heart. Such marks of favour would have been quite sufficient to dazzle the judgment, and warp the virtuous feelings of a wiser and better man than poor Berti dei Ravignani; and so elevated was he with these sudden glimpses of court favour, that he could not forbear boasting of them, on his return home, to his daughter. He soon afterwards announced, with a very consequential air, that he intended to invite the emperor and a few friends to dinner; that he was already extremely well disposed towards him;

that she must take care to put on her best looks, and it was impossible to say to what height of fortune they might not aspire. Intelligent and virtuous as she was beautiful, the fair Gualdrada on hearing these words, though some suspicions flashed across her mind, disdained to notice them, being determined to rely upon herself, and to act as circumstances might require. On the appointed day, therefore, the emperor attended, with a single gentleman, the summons of Messer Berti, to feast with him at his house, where he had the pleasure of being introduced into the society of the beautiful object of all his hopes. Here, while attempting to make himself as agreeable as possible, the emperor had occasion to observe the nobleness and simplicity of her mind and sentiments, no less than her surpassing beauty and the artless graces of her person. And, however desirous of disguising the warmth of his feelings, from motives of delicacy, heightened by the high opinion which he began to entertain of her, he nevertheless could not refrain from availing himself of an opportunity of avowing his sentiments, declaring that he had struggled long and painfully with them, and that he could not help telling her so, however fearful he might be of incurring her displeasure. He trusted she would consider, that in all countries and all ages, the most cau-

tious, as well as the most lofty, of human characters, had at some period of their lives, experienced the same irresistible sentiments which now impelled him, against his better feelings and judgment, to admire, and to avow his admiration and his passion; a passion, which, however unjust and ungenerous it was, in vain he attempted to suppress. He urged that so many illustrious instances, both in Greek and Roman history, would in some measure plead his excuse; the Cæsars, the Hannibals, the Massinissas, the Antonys; the last of whom he verily believed had no apology to offer for his weakness, at all equal to that which stood arrayed in superior charms before him. "And if you deign not now to listen to me," continued the emperor, as he threw himself at the lady's feet, "I feel that my sceptre and my diadem, with all their pomp, are worthless in my eyes; take them; or take at least more than they are worth—the heart that is above them all."

A variety of emotions chased each other over the features of the fair girl, as she listened to the words of the emperor; gratified pride and vanity, terror, shame, and doubt, were all there; but these were again overpowered and absorbed in the more overwhelming sense of love; a love, which, although she ventured not to avow it, clung to another object. Re-

leasing her hand, therefore, from that of the emperor, she made no reply ; but, turning away, burst into tears. Her royal lover, nearly as much distressed as herself, now entreated her forgiveness, accusing himself of the greatest thoughtlessness and cruelty, in having thus inconsiderately tried her feelings. In the most soothing and respectful terms, he entreated her to compose her mind, and fully to rely upon his humanity and honour. As there appeared to be some degree of mystery in her manner of receiving him, he said that he should feel highly gratified to be considered worthy of her confidence, however painful the sacrifice he might have to make in consequence, if, indeed, she could never return his love. Expressing her gratitude for these assurances of kindness and respect, the fair Gualdrada, fearful of offending the emperor in the avowal she was preparing to make, fell at his feet, and besought him to forgive her temerity in venturing to refuse his love. She then confessed, that on the same night of the festival in which she had been presented to his imperial highness, Guido, a young cavalier of his court, had also seen and sought her love : that they had since had several interviews, but that neither of them possessing wealth, she had not ventured to make known his offer to her father. Without a moment's hesitation, the emperor,

thanking her for this proof of confidence, and recovering all his former generosity and magnanimity of feeling, instantly despatched orders for the young cavalier to attend him. On his arrival, presenting the astonished soldier to the weeping and blushing Gualdrada, he observed, with his usual mildness: "It is my pleasure, Guido, that you should espouse this lady, the daughter of a noble, though impoverished house;" and the next day, holding a splendid festival in honour of their nuptials, he himself presented the hand of the fair Gualdrada to his favourite Guido, and conferred upon him a handsome fortune.

TENTH DAY, NOVELLA VIII.

THERE were once two spruce young gentlemen who had more reason to pique themselves upon their good descent, than upon the strength of their mental endowments. To use a familiar expression much applied by the good people of Milan, they both belonged to the parish of San Simpliciano, and from a great similarity of disposition, they had contracted so strict an intimacy, that they were seldom to be seen asunder. When they happened to be in other company, they invariably aimed at leading the conversation to points of fashionable interest, in which alone they were calculated to shine; displaying their abilities in criticising the tastes of others, and indirectly complimenting each other. Their continued repetition of the same fashionable nonsense, so impertinently introduced upon all occasions, had at length the effect of wearying and disgusting all parties where their presence was tolerated. During fine summer weather, they were in the habit of wearing the most costly white silk dresses; their vests were of white velvet, their ruffs of the whitest cambric, their pantaloons and stockings of white silk, and their

hats of white velvet, with white feathers in them. And yet they had the assurance to appear thus accoutred in public, displaying their feathers with all the vanity of peacocks, as they turned arm in arm along the piazzas, full of their own perfections, and eager to attract the notice of spectators, who failed not indeed to smile as they passed; a circumstance which these young sparks placed entirely to their own credit. So pestiferous did they at length become to society, by this display of their vain folly and presumption, that whenever they appeared in a perfectly new suit, their friends invariably avoided them, as they were certain to be regaled with a dissertation upon French tailors, and the newest points and lacings then in mode. "Observe these linings, how well they sit upon this waistcoat! How brilliant are these feathers! Jove! how nobly they wave with the least breath of air. Yet they would not sit well upon any one, let me tell you; there is an art in a man's wearing a handsome dress, by no means common:" and in this way they would run on by the hour together. Among others who had thus suffered under their intolerable rattle, was a sensible and spirited young fellow, who had a particular enmity to the race of fops; and made a solemn vow, in a moment of irritation, to hit upon some species of revenge that

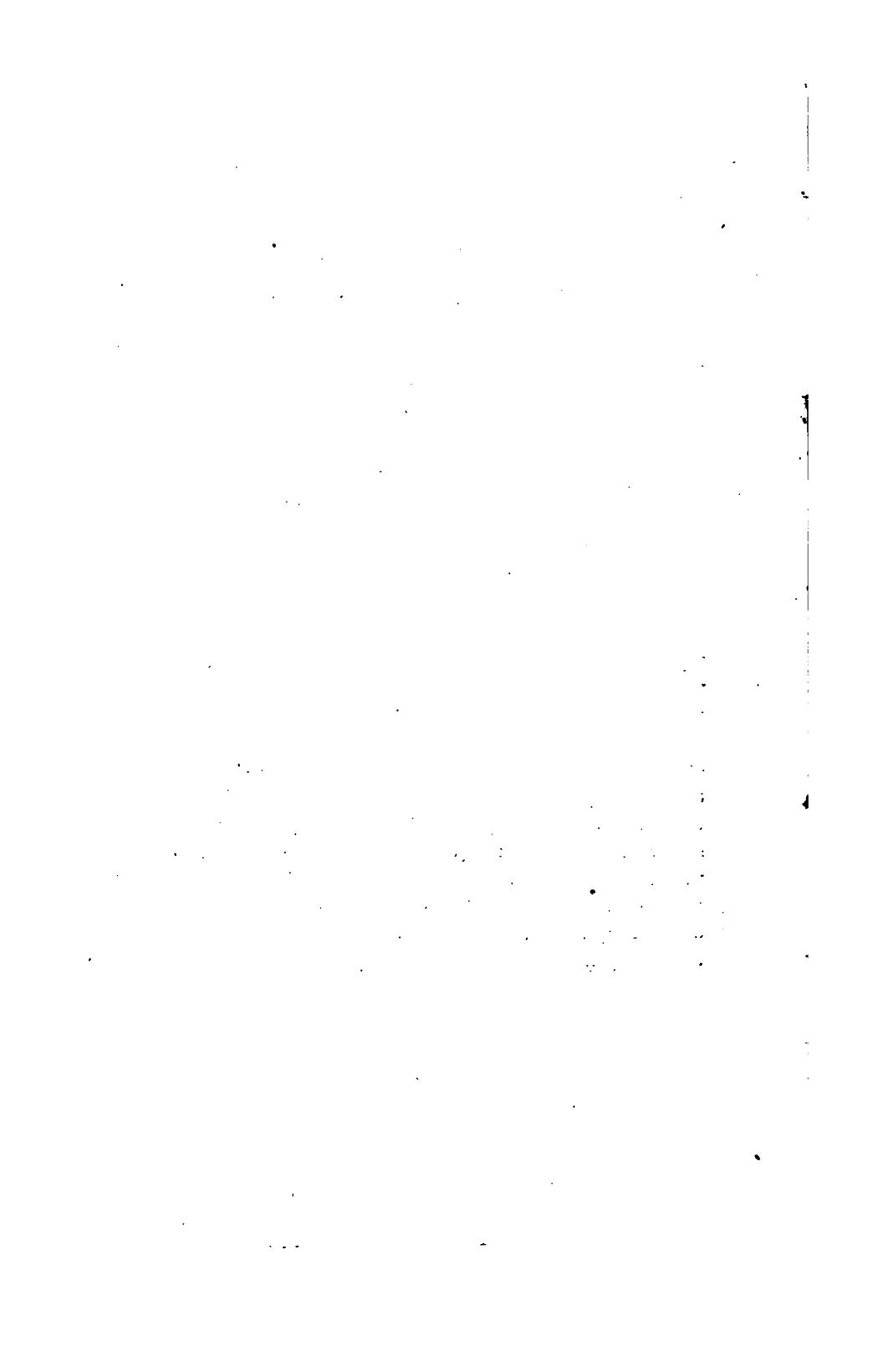
might tend to remove such a nuisance from society, and perhaps, put the authors of it on their good behaviour in future. With this view he conceived a plan which he thought could not fail to produce a happy effect, and only waited for a good opportunity of carrying it into execution.

This soon occurred during the summer season, when our cavaliers were in the habit, as we have said, of assuming their white array, and when they frequented the neighbourhood of our more sensible friend's residence, in order to make themselves agreeable to a party of ladies, who were accustomed to walk near his house. One evening, therefore he stationed himself at his garden gate, as if enjoying the coolness of the air, expecting these two giddy sparks, who in a short time came fluttering by, having displayed their plumes to the amusement of the ladies, who had now returned home. Stepping suddenly forwards, and seizing a hand of each, their friend declared he would make them his prisoners for the rest of the evening; for he had just received some excellent wine, of which he wished to have their opinion. They accepted his challenge, and, with a fashionable roll of their shoulders, accompanied him in, when, finding the servants busily clearing the dining-room, he invited the gentlemen to go and give him their

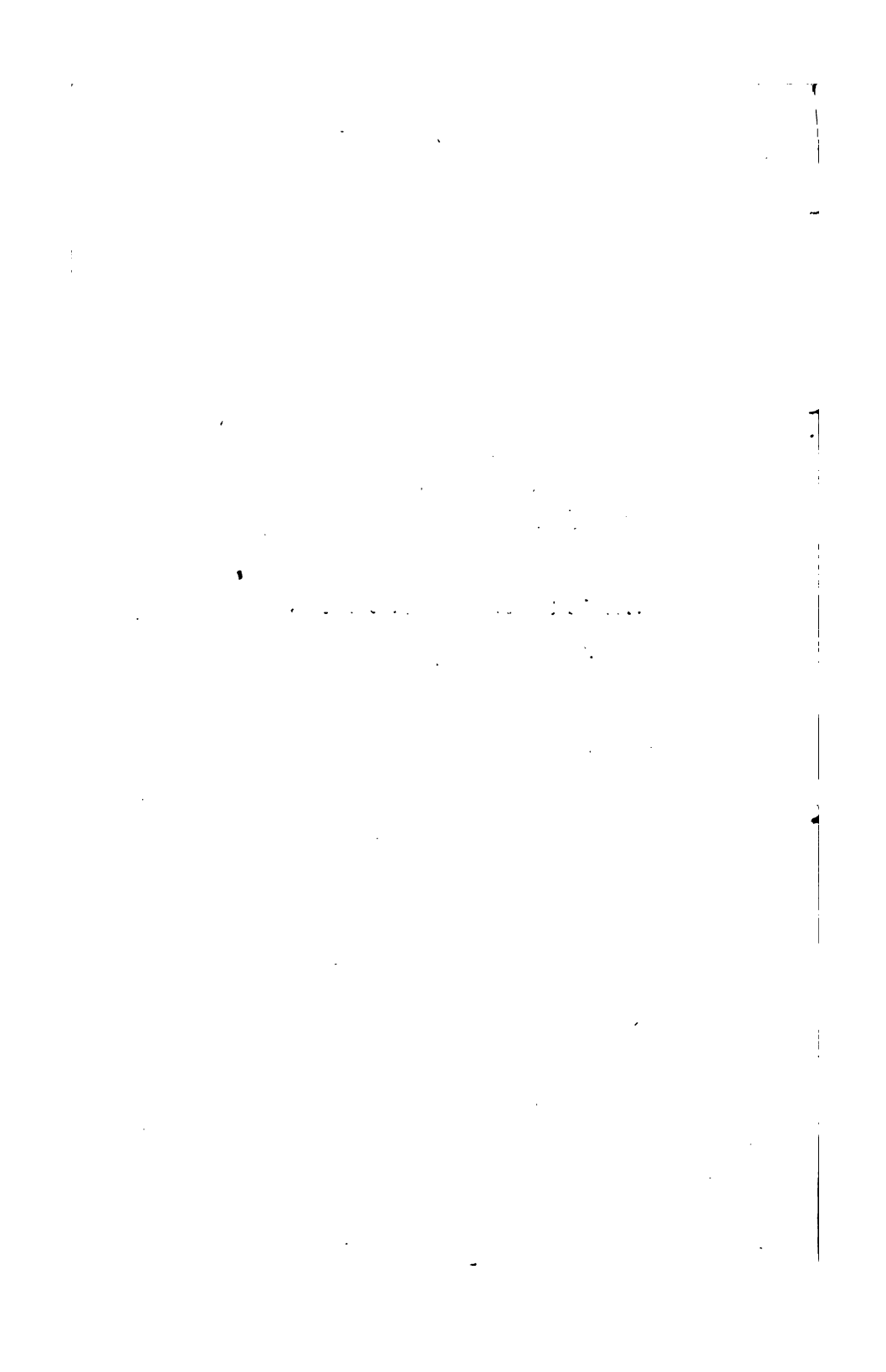
opinion of his selection of wines as they lay in his vaults, where they might also taste it perfectly cool; observing, that he often went there when he found every other place in the world too hot for him. Each of them, then, seizing his glass, mightily amused at the idea, they followed their friend into the vaults, a servant preceding them with a torch, while his fellows were laughing heartily at their master's humour in the room above, one of whom, being entrusted with the secret, had communicated it to all the rest. Several guests in the drawing-room were likewise waiting the event, with no slight mirth exhibited in their countenances. While the glasses were filling, the two coxcombs were busily criticising the various sorts of wines submitted to their taste, and enjoying the coolness, as they rambled about the vaults. Now there was a large vessel filled with water lying near, for the purpose the host had in view. It was of such respectable dimensions as apparently to defy the exertions of a single person to remove it. Attracting the notice of his guests, the host, as if casually passing, observed, "Large as you seem to think it, there is one of my fellows who can throw it upon his shoulders, and carry it up for me whenever I please." One of our fashionables, who, likewise, piqued himself upon his bodily prowess, instantly

laid hands upon it; but finding it resist his efforts even to stir it, he pretty roundly swore he would wager a dozen of champagne, that their host was mistaken. But the fact was again as positively affirmed, till the dispute growing warm on both sides, the young gentleman declared that it would be the fairest way to put it to the proof. "I have no objection," returned the wily host; "here is the very rascal we were just speaking of; he has shoulders broad enough to bear the world: so take up that huge tub, you rogue, and walk. Shew the gentlemen the way up stairs, and take heed you do not let it fall." Forthwith he pitched it upon his neck; and the master leading the way, the two disciples of San Simpliciano somewhat imprudently followed in his rear. The steps were tolerably steep, and the porter, feigning great difficulty, just as he had reached the top, suddenly tripped, and sent the contents of the vessel back again, flying all abroad on every side. Strange was the confusion, and the sputtering, and the exclamations which the two unfortunate fashionables now made; still more strange was the sprinkling and spoiling of their delicate new garments, which truly cut a woeful figure. Instead of a pure white, they now exhibited all the colours in the rainbow, with the addition of black patches, which stuck to their

fine ermine, while they sighed and sobbed with the effects of the cold bathing they had just received. The water had been deeply impregnated with ink and assafoetida, and with other nauseous drugs, to such a degree, that neither of them was free from the taint for more than a twelvemonth. The porter, however, had the humanity to prevent the tub itself from falling, which would otherwise have totally overwhelmed the dripping sparks, who were by no means made of such stout materials, as to withstand the shock it might have occasioned ; being of that brittle texture, which, like glass, will bear no rough usage, though it can receive a polish. The rogue of a porter instantly took to his heels, on viewing the awful ruin he had wrought, while his master, pretending to be in the highest degree offended at his negligence, hastened after him, leaving our poor heroes to digest the venom of his joke as they best could. But not possessing wit enough to see into the jest, they shook hands, before they left, with the happy and triumphant host ; who watched them, along with some of his guests, tripping homewards as fast as they well could, shivering as if in an ague fit, to the infinite amusement of all the passengers.



Nobels of Anton-Francesco Boni.



ANTON-FRANCESCO DONI.

THE subject of our present notice flourished early in the sixteenth century, and his productions are of a very voluminous and diversified character. His novels bear only a small proportion to the rest of his writings, and with an eccentricity of humour that marked all his actions, he dispersed them at intervals, as if to relieve the tedium of his more serious lucubrations, throughout a variety of other works. In a collection very recently published in Italy,* they amount to the number of forty, various in their style and character, and extracted from a variety of sources: from his "Letters," from his work entitled "Librerie," his "Zucca," his "Marmi," his "Mondi," his "Moral Filosofia," from his vast "Commentary upon Burchiello," and from his "Pistolotti d'Amore."

"Though occasionally rude and inverted in point

* Edizione di soli esemplari ottanta, con particolare cura eseguita, per i Dilettanti delle Antiche Novelle Italiane. Edited by Bartolommeo Gamba: 1815.

of style, they are by no means wanting in spirit, and in those sallies of caustic wit and humour," observes the Italian editor, "which give so high a relish to works of a similar kind." Previous to the late collection, Doni had already been admitted into the rank of approved novelists, by Count Borromeo and the classic Poggiali; though he is seldom to be met with in the numerous selections, entitled "Novellieri," from the fictitious productions of some of his more popular countrymen. This, in some measure, probably arose from the same whimsical genius that seems to have influenced all his actions, many humorous traits of which are recounted, and which led him to entertain little anxiety as to the fate of his own productions. To the long list of these, contained in the Borromeo catalogue, and the notices of him by Poggiali, Tiraboschi, and other writers, there is added a still more voluminous account, accompanied by critical and historical remarks, in the collection of tales before referred to. As these are, however, of far too extensive a nature to admit of further commentary here, we must confine our attention to the more popular traits of his life and character, which have been treated by some of his biographers with the same humour and eccentricity, which marked the style and manners of the original. Ti-

raboschi affords several examples of his peculiarities, though far inferior in point of singularity of language, to the pen of a still more modern writer, Signor Capugnano, who has prefixed a very amusing account of the author's life to the recent publication of his novels.

It may not prove unentertaining, perhaps, to the English reader, to extract a few specimens of this very whimsical account of a whimsical genius, taking care not to deprive either the author, or his biographer, of any portion of their burlesque humour. In this respect they will be found to be congenial spirits; the biographer vieing with his subject, in the singularity of his manner of treating it. "Doni," observes Signor Capugnano, "was born in Florence, about the year 1513, and he had no sooner cast his side teeth, than he selected for the scene of his labours, both night and day, some apartments that look out upon the left side of the Annunziata. There he was to be seen, arrayed in his long dark cloak, sometimes studious and alone, and sometimes in the company of those who had so high a conceit of him, as to think him capable of instructing Cardinal d'Arezzo himself, notlong since deceased. Imagining, however, in a few years, that

his gown* sat somewhat uneasy, and looked somewhat too lugubrious, besides being so long as to prevent him from picking his way through life's dirty paths, without fear of soiling himself, he threw it off altogether, and taking a few free bounds into the air, declared that he would no longer serve any body, but in future live only according to his own laws. Then, in order that he might avoid the inquiries of every fool of an acquaintance, to know the motives and reasons of his proceedings, he set off for Venice, resolving to settle there upon his own estate, which he held under the crown of his hat. His pen was put into immediate requisition, being the only means, as he believed, of obtaining an introduction into the great audience-room of the world, 'e per godere quest'aria e quest'acqua.' But soon finding that 'faggots are not to be bound with a sausage,' he withdrew to the pleasant hills of Monselice, surrounded with a delightful view of the castle, and more useful gardens, besides a vast rocky tower, erected some ages before the grandfather of the famous Ezelino made his appearance in the world."—*Vita del Doni*, pp. 2, 3.

* He is said by Tiraboschi to have assumed the ecclesiastical habit, which he afterwards laid aside.

Here the biographer proceeds to relate his study of astronomy and philosophy, with pursuits and inquiries of a still more free and liberal cast, which seem to have awakened the jealousy of the inquisition: "Uscì un tuono che gli scosse tutte le ossa, e gli gelò il sangue nelle vene." There came a sound that shook him to his very bones, and congealed the blood in his veins; and he sought refuge for a period near Ancona, whence he did not again depart, until the season became more mild. He then returned to his residence at Monselice, where he closed his career at no very advanced age, in the year 1574; lamented and esteemed for his convivial disposition, his learning, and his wit.

ANTON-FRANCESCO DONI.

NOVELLA I.

THE dowager queen of Salimspruch had a daughter named Galierina, about five years of age. As she was walking in the garden, this child happened to find a young lizard, with which she ran to her mother in great glee, throwing it, as young girls are apt to do, upon her mother's lap, which so terrified the queen, that she declared, in her anger, she would never consent to bestow her daughter's hand in marriage, until the reptile had grown to the size of the girl herself. She even swore by her crown that she would execute this threat; a vow which greatly displeased the governess of the fair child, who, being affectionately attached to her, vowed on her part to take the best care of the lizard she could. And such was the efficacy of this vow, that with the blessing of heaven and fine feeding, the young lizard began to grow and grow, nor ever stopped, until it became nearly as large as a crocodile. Every one was astonished on beholding it, and greatly praised the care and pru-

dence of Donna Spira, who had thus rescued her fair pupil from the fate of dying an old maid. The latter having attained to maturity, it was deemed proper to try the effect of chance in the disposal of her hand, with which view the queen resolved to kill the lizard, and extract its lungs, in order to exercise the sagacity of her suitors: "Now," said she, "we will proclaim a grand feast and tournament, and invite all the cavaliers in the world, to try their fortune in the joust, and whoever afterwards guesses the name of the reptile which possessed these lungs, let him have my daughter, and half this kingdom, as a reward for his pains."

Far and wide, throughout all cities and nations, spread these happy tidings of a royal tournament, and the marriage of queen Pilessa's beauteous daughter. What magnificent trains of lords and dukes, counts and marquesses, of all ages and nations, were seen gathering towards the happy spot! Long they fought, and fell, and conquered: after which, at the trumpet's sound, were exhibited to view, in the midst of all, the lizard's lungs, and proclamation was made with a loud voice, that whatsoever prince or lord should declare to what animal these reliques had belonged, should be entitled to the princess, and half the kingdom as her dower. Upon this, the

name of every kind of creature in the world, but the right one, was quickly pronounced, until it came to the turn of the duke of Milesi, who, enjoying the good graces of Donna Spira, had fixed his eye boldly upon her beautiful charge. The nurse at length hit upon the following ingenious method, as she thought, of acquainting him with the real nature of the poor lizard's lungs. She cast her eye upon one of the ugliest hunchbacks that was ever seen, as the least suspicious person she could employ; and beckoning him, she said, "If you will promise to be secret, I will make you one of the richest hunchbacks that was ever known; you have only to be wise, and keep silence." On receiving his promise, she gave him a purse of ducats, saying, "Hasten to the Duke of Milesi, and whisper him, on the part of the young lady, that the lungs belonged to a lizard." Upon which, repeating his oath of secrecy, the ugly hunchback left the nurse; and standing for some time apart, he considered whether it would be most prudent to inform the duke, or avail himself of the information on his own account. At length he determined that it would be better to possess half the kingdom for himself than the favour of the reigning prince; and so taking fortune by the forelock, he ventured upon the following bold manœuvre. Making his way

before the queen, he thus addressed her : " Knowing that your royal blood was ever faithful to its engagements, and relying upon the honour of your crown, I appear here to say to what creature these precious reliques belonged, and claim in return your daughter, and half the kingdom." " Certainly, it is so," replied the queen ; while all the barons and courtiers burst into a loud laugh, as he pronounced them to be the lungs of a lizard. " Nay, let those laugh who win," cried the hunchback ; " for I myself once brought up a lizard that grew as large as my back, until putting it one night to bed without its nightcap on, it caught such a bad cold, that before I had time to have it properly cured, it absolutely died of suffocation." The whole company upon this laughed still louder, saying, " Good, very good ; was ever any thing like it ?" But little Hunchback continued, " It is, however, as I say ; because on dissecting my lizard, I found its lungs were made exactly the same as these." The queen replied, " Since fortune has so far favoured you, I am bound to observe my engagement ; and now truly the hand of my daughter, with half of the kingdom, is your own."

Mr. Hunchback was accordingly arrayed like a courtier, and exalted above all the barons of the land : there was no denying that he was the fair pri-

cess's future spouse. Sad, however, was the envy and heart-burning of the suitors, to behold such a monster so well versed in the anatomy of lizards, and entitled to the fair princess's hand. Truly they would have laid foul hands upon him, and eaten him up alive, could they have found an opportunity, but he kept close to his princess's side. But what was the indignation of her nurse, when expecting to behold the handsome duke, she saw this little wretch elevated in his place! Casting upon him the eye of a basilisk, though she ventured not to break out into open abuse, she muttered to herself, "Oh, villain of a hunchback! by the holy cross of our Lord, I will make thee pay dearly for this!" Then, full of the most desperate thoughts, she proceeded to consult with her unhappy charge, who also viewed him with evident reluctance, and listened but too willingly to every possible means of despatching him, in preference to receiving him as her lord. But the glorious tidings having already gone abroad, there came a number of fresh hunchbacks, flocking to the royal festival of their companion, who performed a variety of admirable tricks, to the astonishment of all the court. This added not a little to the influence of the new prince, who seemed greatly pleased at the praises which they on all sides elicited. But

to cut short the scene, which he thought began to trench a little upon his dignity, when the presumptuous hunchbacks approached him familiarly, to receive their reward, their royal brother gave each of them a kick upon their bumps, and ordered them to be taken down into the kitchen.

Now this unkind usage of his old friends was extremely grating to the gentle feelings of his princess; she therefore gave secret orders that these very facetious hunchbacks should be invited for another day, in order to receive the due recompense of their humorous tricks. In the mean time, under various pretexts, she contrived to keep her royal consort at a distance, until the day, appointed for the return of the hunchbacks, arrived. They were directly introduced into the princess's chamber, where she opened upon their astonished eyes a variety of trunks filled with costly apparel; but, just as she was in the act of presenting some to them, the footsteps of her crooked spouse were heard actually ascending the staircase. There was no alternative but to thrust the little crooked fellows into the trunks, which was no sooner done than the royal hunchback stepped into the chamber. All was still as death; for had they made the least noise, they would infallibly have been hanged, to satisfy the foolish jealousy of his highness. He

remained with the princess some time, which placed the lives of his trembling subjects in the utmost jeopardy, as they were already beginning to gasp for breath. Still he stayed, and stayed; and when at length, on his taking his leave, the princess hastened to open the trunks, what was her surprise and sorrow on finding that all her amusing guests were quite dead! After breathing harder and harder, they had gone into convulsions, and their feeble kicks had scarcely reached the ears of the royal spouses. Closing the trunks, however, she resolved to make the best of a bad business; and consulting with her nurse, they forthwith confided the whole affair to a faithful courtier, presenting him at the same time with a sum of money. With this he directly proceeded to purchase three large bags, exactly alike; and calling a stout porter, he gave them to him, saying, "Follow me;" and marched back, as fast as he could, straight into the palace. They first took one of the little deceased, and squeezing him till he came within the dimensions of the bag, the princess, addressing the porter, said, "Do you mark me? Carry this sack away, and throw it, just as it is, into the river. Here are ten ducats; but take heed how you open it, and when you come back you shall have twenty more." So the porter threw the burden on

his shoulder, saying, "I wish I had more such jobs as these;" and after pitching it into the river, he hastened back as fast as he could. In the chamber he found the same identical burden lying there, which he thought he had just disposed of, the second humpback having assumed the place of the first. Testifying no little surprise, the lady said to him, "Do not be alarmed; but truly he is a sly villain, as you see, and delights to plague people. He will be sure to come back again, if you do not throw him far enough, and sink him in the river; this time you must take better care." Perfectly satisfied with the ducats, the man took up his burden, and again launched it into the deepest part of the river he could find, and staying to watch it fairly sink, he exclaimed in a joyful tone, "I think you are fairly gone at last;" for the night was now setting in, and he did not much relish another journey along the banks of the river. Taking a light, however, he returned into the chamber, and beheld a third sack ready prepared for him; and seizing it in no little anger, he bore it away. But as soon as he had made his way through the crowd, he determined, at all hazards, to know with what kind of a devil he had to deal; and opening the bag, he found an ugly little hunchback in it. "Oh, thou cursed beast!" he cried,

"I will try to end thee now;" and taking out a huge knife, he severed the head from the body. Then thrusting it into the sack, filled with stones and iron, he once more committed him to the river, and made his way back to the palace. Now it so chanced, that just at the entrance he met with the royal hunchback himself, returning doubtless from some mischievous expedition, and making the best of his way to pay another visit to his beloved princess. The porter had no sooner set his eyes upon him than he exclaimed in the utmost indignation, "Ah, villain Hunchback, are you here before me again?" and seizing him with all the glorious strength of a porter by the beard, he bound him in a moment quite fast, and thrusting him into the sack, he said, "Three-times you have made me return, and yet you are at it again; but we shall see who has the best of it." In this way he carried the royal hunchback along, who in vain asserted his title to majesty, and that he was just going on a visit to his queen, and endeavoured to bribe his treacherous subject at any price. It was all in vain: he was thrown headlong into the river, while the porter proceeded back, not without some apprehension that he should have another journey. On mounting the staircase, however, and proceeding into the chamber, he had the satisfaction of beholding his

labours completed ; for no more hunchbacks were to be seen. " Yes, you have done," said the princess ; " I do not think he will come back any more now :— here, take all these ducats, and fare you well." The porter replied, " But he has returned a good many times though ; for I met him just now coming in at the gate ; so I bound him fast, and put him into the sack in spite of him, and then threw him again into the river. To be sure, he offered me a deal of money to let him go ; and threatened and swore, and said he was the king ; but it was all of no use : he was obliged to be drowned. So I think I have earned my wages well, by four such journeys as these."

Upon hearing these tidings, the princess and her maids of honour were quite overjoyed ; and lavishing the most liberal favours upon the porter for his lucky blunder, they bribed him to keep the matter secret. Thus, by a single blunder, the porter became a rich man ; the lady was freed from an ugly brute of a husband ; and the duke of Milesi made happy, in possessing the charms of the beautiful princess. Let the fate of the royal hunchback be a lesson, then, for those, who are inclined, by fraudulent means, to advance themselves at the expense of others.

NOVELLA V.

IN old times, at least some ninety years ago, there lived a certain shopkeeper named Girolamo Linaiuolo, who was remarkable for some green beauty spots upon his visage. His shop was situated exactly opposite to that of mine host of the Bell, a favourite resort of travellers, one of whom, crossing the way, addressed him one day as follows: "Surely I saw you hanged the other day at Milan. How have you contrived to rise again from the dead?" But Girolamo denied that he had ever been hanged, and that there was any resurrection in the case. "Don't tell me so," returned the other, "for I saw you stretched out upon your bier, and I counted exactly the same number of marks upon your face, just sixteen, as you have now. The priests were singing '*In die illâ tremendâ*;' and moreover I tell you, that you have had two wives, you have such and such marks on your arm and on your side; and your second wife, who told us so, is now married again to Ambrogio da Porta Comasina, my own servant. What think you of that? do you think I should say so much, if it were not true?"

At these words, Girolamo turned very pale, exclaiming, "Alas, what did I die of then? I was never hanged." "Well, if you do not like to call it so, I am sure you died very suddenly; thousands can bear witness to that, and you ought still to be dead; take a looking glass, look at yourself, and you will find how it is." Trembling in every limb, the poor shopkeeper stole a hasty glance at the glass, and beholding himself looking so like a corpse, without further disputing the truth of what was said, he wrapped his mantle about him, and, drawing his hat over his eyes, made the best of his way towards Cestello, where he had a house. By the way he tried to console himself, saying, "At all events, there will be no more trouble in this world for me; no more 'Buy, buy, please to buy;' 'Sell, sell;' 'Please to try this, Signor,' and, 'Run, you rascal boy, with these to the gentleman.' No, my shop must be shut up; there is an end of all this now." So, convinced that he had departed this life long ago, as it had been so clearly demonstrated by the traveller, he immediately pulled his clothes off, and laid himself out the moment he reached home. Placed in his winding sheet upon a large table, with a taper burning, and a cross at his head, with two more blessed lights, which he had borrowed for the purpose, burning at his feet, he pa-

tiently awaited his interment. His wife coming in, and seeing him thus ready prepared for his funeral, far from shewing the least inclination to disturb him, sounded the alarm, and affected to weep over her dear husband's death. Of course no one pretended to dispute it, and it was determined that our hero should be interred in all due form. Fortunately, however, two of his friends had witnessed his interview with the traveller, of whom one agreed to take the care of his shop, while the other followed him, to observe the result. Finding he was so intent upon being buried, they resolved to humour him, and prepared him a vault in San Lorenzo, where they actually interred him. But, at the same time, they had the kindness to furnish it also with a table of provisions, and two other persons were interred alive, to keep him company and take care of him. After enjoying a good sleep, our hero opened his eyes in his new abode, and saw a table full of refreshments, with two guests seated there enjoying themselves. Gazing round him some time as he lay there in a state of suspense, he at length began to feel extremely hungry, and, addressing himself to the guests, said, "Do the dead eat then?" They replied, "Yes, indeed they do, Signor!" Upon which Girolamo immediately rose and joined them, doing ample jus-

tice to the good things he found there. "What shall we do next?" he inquired, when they had concluded their feast. "Why, I think we had better go home," replied one of the others; "let us think of looking after our business according to the Lord's commandment; for those who will not work shall not eat, you know." "Blessed be the name of the Lord," cried Girolamo, "if I can only contrive to accomplish my resurrection, for the second time, I shall be truly delighted." "Come, then," said the other, "I dare say it may be done, if you will lend a hand here;" and, so saying, all the three put their shoulders to the task, and at last removing the covering of the vault, they walked quietly home together. But though our hero afterwards committed a thousand follies and extravagancies, to the no small entertainment of the neighbourhood, he had never again the good luck to rise from the dead. The next time of his disappearance, which was caused by a cruel lady, he was no longer so fortunate. It was by far the most serious decease of the three, and having already continued about ninety years, he may possibly during that time have got the megrims out of his brain.

NOVELLA VI.

INSCRIBED TO MESSER TIBERIO PANDOLFO.

IN truth, my dear Messer Tiberio, I have been almost obliged to have a new pair of braces made for me; so outrageously have I laughed at a certain Magnifico, by name Benetto da Francolino, generally speaking, a kind of friend of ours. Tell me whether I had not reason, as soon as you have perused the following notorious instance of his folly, one which the king of the fools himself might adopt as the future model of all his proceedings. Yet I cannot afford to begin at the beginning of his foolery, or to tell you how he succeeded to his hereditary nonsense; how he boasts his nobility to the winds for want of other listeners; how he keeps a journal and ledger of the miraculous things he does every day, and last, but not least, how he glories in vaunting himself above all the other lords of the creation.

A certain legate of his Holiness, in Venice, was in the habit of familiar intercourse with this windy patrician, for the very sufficient reason, that he had, a long time ago, been enlisted in the service of his most reverend patrons at Rome. Now, *in illo tem-*

port, about the same time, I say, came his very Holiness himself, to hold a papal interview with the Duke of Ferrara, in the noble state of Lombardy. His residence was engaged for him, the houses were marked with chalk, and all the monasteries of the city were almost bursting with pious people, who, longing to have a sight of the Pope, like good children put every thing in order, at a few days warning, to receive their holy father. The good legate had not intended to be present at this solemn proceeding; but somehow a whim took him, when he heard of the duke's grand preparations to receive his master, to have a servant's share in them. Besides, he was always on the look out for occasions in which to do honor to the Holy See, and to his friends and patrons, for his faith in whom "he was always ready to give a reason." In this humour, he observed to his friend Benetto: "Now, if I thought I could obtain any lodging in Ferrara, I would instantly spur away, and arrive in time to make my solemn entry along with his Holiness." "Would you so?" cried his vain-glorious companion; "why did not you mention this before? for I do assure you, most reverend Father in God, I have a palace there, which is quite at your service." "Indeed," returned the legate, "I had no idea of that; but, such being the case, I shall con-

sider myself extremely fortunate." "Then I hope," said this prince of liars, "that your excellency will not scruple to honour my palace with your presence, for there is only one gentleman who has now apartments in it: but I have expressly reserved for my own use the rooms on the ground floor. You will also find, I trust, a good sample of wine, which I beg you will not spare." "But perhaps," said the legate, "your lodger may be some distinguished prelate—some friend of yours, who may be occupying the whole suite of rooms." Our magnificent boaster, with an air of well affected surprise, answered, "He dare as soon eat his fingers off, as occupy a square foot of deal board, without my permission: for I assure you, were he to come into my rooms below, I should very quickly eject him out of those above stairs, and he knows that well."

Now who would have believed that a pope's legate could be so far deceived by his supreme effrontery of face, as to give credit to this boasting beast of an impostor? Yet such was the fact; for he made preparations to set out, packing up his pious paraphernalia, hiring his gondolas for his domestics, and then setting off post at great expense and inconvenience to Francolino; and thence, proceeding by forced stages, they shortly arrived at Ferrara. Dur-

ing the way, the legate's false friend had kept up a continued volley of flattery and folly, declaring that it appeared to him a thousand years until he had the pleasure of beholding a pope's nuncio in his palace, and of honouring him to the utmost stretch of his great authority in Ferrara. In return the legate thanked him, promising to find an occasion to shew his gratitude. So far, however, from possessing a palace, this vile Benedetto Franchini was not even worth a common stall in Ferrara, commanding just as much property and influence there as I do myself. He had, however, contrived to worm himself into the favour of a gentleman, whose son, a young man of about thirty, having acquired great influence over him, had the full command of his father's house in town; the identical palace fixed upon by our hero. On this occasion the young gentleman had been at the trouble of furnishing it in the best style for the reception of some Venetian ladies and their friends, whose arrival he was expecting with the utmost joy and ardour. Four of his servants were in waiting on the lower floor, prepared to receive his visitors; while he himself went to take a ride in the city. The domestics were accordingly on the watch, as good servants ought to be, on the tiptoe of expectation. When, hark the sound of wheels! a grand equipage stopped

at the door, and outstepped our two gentlemen, assisted by their retinue, from their carriage; but, to the surprise and disappointment of our lacqueys, always a gallant race of men, they were accompanied by no ladies. What could be the meaning of this? Fortune, however, too soon unravelled the mystery, to the confusion of our unlucky and vain-glorious hero. She availed herself of this occasion to proclaim him the King of Fools, as far as his name and exploits extended. But, in the mean time, he advanced to welcome his reverend friend, on arriving at his palace, inquiring what he thought of it, whether the rooms were such as he liked, and suited to his convenience? "Truly it is a noble palace," exclaimed the legate, as he paced the magnificent suite of rooms, "and I thank you." "Such as it is," returned his false host, "it is quite at your excellency's service; only take the trouble of ordering every thing, just as if you were in your own house." Then proceeding towards the door to watch the arrival of the real master, he said within himself, "Now, what shall I say when this troublesome fellow comes? I will tell him it is by the duke's express orders that we have taken possession here, and that he must seek out other lodgings as long as the festival lasts. Yes, I think that will do!" Just as he had resolved upon

this modest proposal, about the hour of supper, there came riding up the young lord of the mansion, who, the moment he saw the equipages at the door, with a lover's eagerness gave spurs to his horse, wondering how the ladies could have escaped him, and, thinking every moment an age, until he had saluted his love. He threw himself from his horse, and bounded at a single step into the house, when, instead of the fair girl, he encountered our hero on the threshold, who with the utmost effrontery offered him his hand, saying, "How rejoiced I am to see you here; I am a particular friend of your father's, who is under some obligation to me. I have, therefore, made free to bring hither the pope's ambassador at Venice, a very distinguished prelate, whose patronage you may thus enjoy. I have only, however, put him into possession of these four apartments on the lower floor for a few days; and if you please, I will assist you in finding another abode, while we inform your intended guests that we act by the duke's orders, and whatever are his excellency's commands, we must take them patiently."

On hearing this presumptuous blockhead's demands, the young lover, greatly shocked at his disappointment, had yet sufficient sense to see through the trick, and resolved rather to perish than to break

his engagement to the friends of his beloved. Had it even been the pope, or the emperor, he could not have controlled his passion, as he exclaimed: "Away, thou villain, rogue, impostor, beast as thou art! Tell me not of the pope, or the pope's ambassador; the house is mine, sir; these apartments are intended for two young ladies, and other noble Venetians, and for no one else; so quick, begone, you wretch! Go, or be kicked out, whichever you like best." Hearing high words, the legate made his appearance, dreading lest any thing might happen to his honourable friend and worthy host, Franchino, and he was followed by all the domestics. As soon as our young lover set his eyes upon the good bishop in his canonicals, he addressed him as follows: "I am concerned that your lordship should have been made the dupe of this worthless fellow's base and cowardly imposture, in thus bringing you to a stranger's residence. But this mansion is my father's, and has already been offered to a number of Venetian ladies and gentlemen, whom I am every moment expecting to see. Had I been aware, however, of the honour intended me, there is no one I should have been more proud to accommodate than yourself, and I trust you will consent to remain here for the evening. But not so this prince of impostors, for he must decamp; and I will take

upon me to provide your excellency with a suitable residence tomorrow."

The illustrious prelate endeavoured to express how greatly he was shocked at what had occurred, but was hardly able to open his mouth, so much had he been taken by surprise. "Pardon me, my dear young signor; upon my word, it is the most unlucky, the strangest thing I ever knew; and I do assure you, young man, as I value his Holiness's blessing, that I should not have stirred out of Venice, much less have got into such a dreadful bustle as there is in Ferrara, had not this child of Satan assured me before he set out that the palace was his own, and that every thing was at my disposal. But, truly, I will find my way back again to-night, before you shall have the least trouble on my account," and, saying this, he turned round very fiercely upon his deceitful friend, who, in dread of receiving his immediate malediction, took to his heels and disappeared.

The young lover, being as good as his word, and wishing to get his Holiness's nuncio quietly out of the way, went and took some rooms for him in a neighbouring convent, where he was duly received and honoured by the whole fraternity. From this incident, the good bishop and the young lover were led into a very agreeable acquaintance, which they

owed entirely to the absurd impertinence of the eminent ass who had brought them together, and whom they resolved to seize an occasion of requiting, in such a way, as to give him no inclination to repeat similar experiments. It is pleasant to see a conceited blockhead thus taken in his own snares, and I have always a singular satisfaction in putting him upon record, by way of amusement as well as example.

NOVELLA XI.

I WAS acquainted, not very long ago, with two cavaliers, who, as sometimes will happen, had imbibed the bitterest enmity to each other, but whose names I do not think it prudent here to disclose. It will be enough to state that the one was of a noble and fearless character, and the other of as vile and treacherous a disposition. Conceiving himself injured by the former, yet not venturing to challenge him to single combat, or to clear up his honour face to face, the coward employed himself in devising some other means of revenging the slight he imagined he had received. Having been frequently foiled and worsted in the joust, where his adversary had greatly distinguished himself, as well as in many engagements in which he had vanquished his enemies hand to hand, and intitled himself to rank among the heroes of his time, his cowardly foe, jealous of his fame, let no occasion escape of attempting to carry him off by treachery. Though aware of the inveterate malice entertained against him, his more noble-minded enemy, scorning to notice it, refused to take any precautions to ward off the danger, believing that if he

really felt himself aggrieved, he would adopt the usual course of inviting him into the open field. In this supposition he held himself on the alert, well furnished with horse and arms, and resolved to evince the same valour which he had shewn on former occasions.

But the consequences to himself were infinitely more fatal than he could have apprehended; for his unworthy opponent, learning that he was about to take a journey from Rome to Naples, had the baseness, impelled by jealousy and revenge, to lie in wait for him, accompanied by forty or fifty ruffians, in a solitary part of the road. There, when the brave cavalier made his appearance, accompanied only by a few friends and attendants, he suddenly found himself surrounded by a band of armed banditti, led by his enemy, to whom he immediately addressed himself with the confidence of one who was incapable of suspecting the meditated treachery, while his followers, alarmed at the disproportionate numbers, drew in their horses' heads, awaiting with anxiety the result. The false traitor riding up to his brave enemy, called upon him to yield, or that he was a dead man; to which he replied by clapping his hand upon his sword, but he was soon overpowered by numbers, and disarmed. "You are now in my

power," exclaimed his exulting and cowardly foe; "and if you do not here consent to what I shall propose, I will despatch you upon the spot, along with all your friends. But if you accede to my proposal, you shall all go free." "Let me hear what it is you require," said the other. "It is this: that you subscribe this paper with your own hand; nothing more," said the villain, "I assure you." Now the writing was to the following tenor: "I do hereby certify and make known, of my own free and uninfluenced will, that all the feats of arms which I have hitherto achieved, whether in jousts and tournaments, single battle, or in the field, were performed by aid of diabolical arts and enchantments, and in no way by my own valour. No one need be surprised at this, who reflects upon the thousand infernal acts daily brought about at the instigation of the devil. I do moreover, here make confession that I am a most disloyal traitor, a heretic, and an atheist; in proof whereof, I do under my own hand, and in the presence of the following witnesses, subscribe my name to the above true and faithful declaration."

To this vile forgery the unhappy cavalier, as well to save the lives of his friends as his own, was induced, in a fatal moment, to subscribe his name, in the be-

lief that the vengeance of his implacable foe would thus be satisfied. For could he have believed it possible that further treachery was intended against him, he would have died, along with his friends, a thousand deaths, sooner than have consented to such an act of dishonour, without the hope of ever clearing his fame. But the moment this unmanly villain had obtained the signature of his name, turning towards the unfortunate gentleman, he said : " It would not have half satiated my vengeance, to have deprived you of your life, for I have long hated you, and I have now succeeded in robbing you of your life, your honour, and your soul itself." Then, while offering up the most piteous prayers for mercy, he basely assassinated the wretched cavalier upon the spot ; and glutted with vengeance and blood, afterwards permitted the rest of the party to retire uninjured, who were the means of handing down his infamy to the execrations of the world.

NOVELLA XII.

THERE has lately risen up, in a place on the confines of Lombardy, a new saint, now ready to be added to the calendar. Having abandoned the profession of curing bodies, in which his conscience began to reproach him with having despatched nearly the whole list of his patients to another world, he undertook the more harmless cure of souls, induced by the same motive of enriching himself at the expense of others. For his cloak of religion, then, he assumed a lion's skin, in which he came to Piacenza, entitling his order—**THE APOSTOLIC RULE OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS, IN THE HABIT OF THE FIRST HERMIT, ST. PAUL.**

This new invention he supported by a thousand other spiritual fabrications of the same kind, studying the most successful impostures of his predecessors, and persuading the good people, like a rogue as he was, to erect him a convent for his new dis-order of monks, quite worthy of their great superior, whose creed was principally to lighten the pockets of their congregation, and of simple wayfaring travellers, by

virtue of the miracles and relics which they exhibited to view.

Thus, in a short time, from a death-dealing doctor he became a little spiritual despot, reconciling it better to his conscience to tyrannize over the minds, than to torture the bodies, of his patients; until fortune, who can ill support the sight even of a good man in prosperity, lent him a few such smart kicks, in the exercise of his new functions, from one who had detected his imposture, as to lead him to conclude he had gone somewhat too far, though he found it too late to retrace his steps. In short, after having shorn his flock as close as any shepherd well could, he was himself overreached, exposed, and compelled to take to flight, by some superior master in the same art, whose subtlety exceeded even his own. For though he fought hard to maintain his spiritual government, and again to recover his lost ground, it was all in vain; no new relics, no fresh miracles could avail him; the charm of his reputation was flown, and a still more successful candidate was now elected to the throne.

Under these circumstances he took to an ambulatory mode of warfare, proceeding from monastery to monastery, husbanding his relics and miracles in a most surprising manner, and exhibiting them only

as necessity seemed to require. In the course of these his travels, the last and greatest of his impostures is well deserving of record, even among those preserved in the catalogue of San Ciappelletto. It happened that in journeying one day towards Nizza, he was taken seriously unwell ; so much so as to be obliged to seek refuge in a neighbouring convent, belonging to the friars of I know not what disorder, where he was glad to be able to repose. Here, as long as he had money enough to make himself comfortable, his residence was highly agreeable to the holy fathers, although the fame of his wicked impostures had reached the place before him ; but the moment his resources began to fail, there was a marked change for the worse in their conduct towards our San Giovanni. Their whispers became louder, they began to consult the reputation of their monastery, and the patient could scarcely rest in his bed, for their importunities to get rid of him and to send him to the hospital ; for as to themselves, they declared that they were heartily tired of him. In this way they went on, day after day, worse and worse, as well as the patient, who, by his condition, seemed resolved to have the benefit of dying in their hands. There was, indeed, only about another hour's life in him, when they came to the resolution of removing

him ; upon which, in order better to defeat their plan, he died in half an hour, congratulating himself that he had thus succeeded in laying his bones with them, like a pious monk, even against their will. The whole fraternity, not a little perplexed how to act, and desirous of obviating the scandal which might attach to them, of having received so notorious a delinquent under their protection, resolved to put the best face they could upon the matter, to give him all due funereal honours, in a public and pompous display, to pronounce an oration, and clear his memory from the vile imputations cast upon it ; and if all this proved not enough to absolve them in the eyes of the people, to canonize him by the name of " San Giovanni the younger," without delay. For this purpose, the most specious and oratorical monk of the brotherhood was fixed upon to deliver the oration, who went through the whole service with so much credit both to himself and to the deceased saint, that the people, not satisfied with giving mere empty applauses, immediately began a collection, beyond the expectation of the most sanguine of the order. Our hero then was unanimously made a saint, in a style that would have excited the envy of his predecessor, San Ciappelletto, and proceeded to work various miracles accordingly.

But for my own part, I do not give the least faith to these saints who excite the wonder and applause of the vulgar, confining it only to such as are duly approved and beatified by the holy church of the faithful at Rome.

NOVELLA XIV.

Two knights of Portugal, both of whom are probably still in existence, entertaining a mortal enmity towards each other, were incessantly occupied in studying the surest means of taking revenge. The one, however, who first conceived himself injured, surpassed his adversary in the vigilance with which he watched every occasion of carrying his designs into execution. This ferocious disposition was further nurtured by the circumstance of his inability, either in force or courage, successfully to contend with his enemy, which, while it compelled him to stifle the expression of his hatred, led him to reflect upon every secret method of annoying him in his power. Though formerly of noble and virtuous dispositions, this unhappy feud had so far disordered his better feelings and his judgment, as to induce him to commit one of the most atrocious actions recorded in history. He watched his opportunity of surprising and assassinating both the father and brother of his nobler foe; intelligence of which fact having reached the court, a proclamation was forthwith issued by the king, forbidding

his subjects, under the severest penalties, to harbour the author of so foul a crime, while officers were despatched on all sides in pursuit of him.

After perpetrating the deed, the assassin, hearing the proclamation everywhere bruited in his ears; and believing it impossible long to elude the vigilance of his pursuers, torn at the same time by the agonies of remorse and guilt, came to a resolution rather of dying by the hand of him whom he had so deeply injured, than awaiting the more tardy and ignominious course of justice. For, having satiated his revenge, the idea of what he had once been, and of his lost fame and honour, rushed with an overwhelming sense of despair across his mind; and he felt a dark and fearful satisfaction in yielding himself up to the sword of his deeply injured adversary. With this view he secretly issued from his retreat, under cover of the night, and having before day-break reached the residence of him whom he deemed his executioner, he presented himself in his astonished presence with the fatal poniard in his hand, kneeling and baring his bosom as he offered it to the grasp of his foe.

Impelled by a sudden feeling of revenge, and viewing the assassin in his power, the cavalier was in the act of plunging the steel into his breast, but restraining his passion, and conceiving it dishonourable

the royal pardon for him, and permission to reside in any part of his majesty's dominions.

In admiration of his unequalled magnanimity, the king readily conceded what he wished ; while, the unhappy object of their favour, overwhelmed with feelings of remorse and shame, humbled himself before his generous conqueror, and ever afterwards evinced sentiments of the utmost gratitude and respect to the noble cavalier, being at once the most faithful friend and follower he ever had.

NOVELLA XXII.

THERE was a certain Greek gentleman, who, with immense wealth, possessed an extremely sociable disposition, which latter quality, however, did not prevent his entertaining great aversion for every kind of scandal and buffoonery. During the summer season he usually kept open house, and invited all the most estimable characters he could meet with in the vicinity, to dine with him. Now it so happened, that having occasion one day to give a splendid feast in his suite of lower rooms, there was introduced to his table among others a notorious wit and buffoon of the very stamp to which he had taken such an antipathy. Even before dinner was announced, he began to broach his budget of news and lies, and wicked witticisms, in which he was encouraged by the applause of too many of the guests. Perceiving the low turn the conversation was taking, the shrewd and accomplished host, catching his eye, affected at first to take his tricks and witticisms all in good part, observing, "How I love a humorous man! you are heartily welcome, signor; it is an age since I have met with your equal. If I thought that exalting you to the head of the table could add the least jot to your humour, by

Jove, you should do the honours of the house for me." Then pointing to the grand repast that lay spread out before them, he insisted upon his first tasting a precious kind of wine before sitting down to table, adding, with a gay and joyous aspect, "You know it has ever been our custom, gentlemen, previous to arranging our places here, to take precedence according to our respective agility. First of all, we must try which can leap the highest over a handkerchief; secondly, which can jump the furthest, making three essays each. Whoever leaps the highest, let him have the second place; but whoever jumps the farthest, surely he will be entitled to the first. Now let me try whether I cannot still preserve my place at the head of my own table;" and bounding up three times to a prodigious height, our alert Greek made the rest of the company almost despair. He begged the buffoon, by way of compliment, to follow him next, and then the other guests; but their efforts to equal him were vain. "Now then," cried the count, "we shall see who will have the first place;" and, taking a start, he made a most astonishing hop, skip, and a jump, the length of the whole room. In fact he went half-way through the door, while murmurs of applause followed the exploit. Our witty gentleman, intent upon rivalling the count, and securing the first place at table, summoned all his

strength, and with the third leap succeeded in beating his adversary by at least two feet. When the wily Greek saw that he had jumped himself fairly out of the door, he instantly turned the key upon him, shutting in the other guests and himself, and cried out in a triumphant tone: "Go, for you are beneath our notice: beaten hollow, all to nothing! Let us sit down!" a proposal to which the other guests unanimously assented. The wit then, for the first time in his life, perhaps, perceived that he had been outwitted; he heard the torrent of laughter bursting from the room, and sought a dinner for that day elsewhere. The good host observing that they were well rid of such a scandalous, backbiting wretch, who only went about hatching mischief, began to entertain his company, like a true gentleman as he was, and for once feasted with closed instead of open doors, a circumstance, however, which seldom occurred. Oh, that others would take example by him, instead of fostering with their smiles, a set of half starved ragamuffin wits and sycophants, who repay such kindness by poisoning the real pleasure, and destroying the proprieties of decent and respectable tables, uttering a thousand falsehoods and defamations, which not unfrequently end in heart-burnings, duels, and death itself!

NOVELLA XXX.

Two young courtiers once laid a plot together to carry off a beautiful young girl from her mother's protection; one of whom, having already engaged her affections, succeeded, under the most solemn promises of marriage, in seducing her from the path of duty. Though of humble origin, she was as intelligent and accomplished as she was beautiful, yet her youth and inexperience, united to the pleadings of affection, at length betrayed her to her ruin. She nevertheless placed such unbounded confidence in her lover's honour, and such was the ascendancy he acquired over her, that she was prevailed upon, when the ardour of his love had passed away, to resume her former dress, and consent to return to her mother's home, in the belief that on the appointed day he would come and claim her hand in marriage. In this way she was, late one evening, borne by these bad friends to her former dwelling, one of them pretending to bind himself for the fulfilment of the other's engagements. They left her a little money, and took their leave of their weeping victim, repeating their false promises of a speedy return.

Here her unhappy situation could not long be concealed from her mother, whose mingled grief and passion on learning the fatal truth, were such as only a mother can fully appreciate, but which it is impossible to convey in words. Drowned in tears of anguish, her daughter in vain attempted to inspire her with the hopes she herself felt, to excuse the conduct and assert the honourable intentions of her lover. The mother soon saw the full extent of her poor girl's misfortune, the long tissue of premeditated cruelty and deceit to which she had fallen a prey; and the hand which had been suddenly raised, as if to strike her to the earth, only clasped her neck in the fulness of maternal sorrow and affection. But their unhappiness did not rest here; the tongue of scandal soon became busy with their good name, which had lately ranked among the best and purest, and the mother, goaded with redoubled anguish, now insisted upon their appealing to the Duke Alexander for redress, not the least distinguished among the Medici for his love of justice throughout Florence. With patient attention the duke listened to her unhappy story, and told her to wipe away her tears, for that, as far as depended upon him, she should no longer have occasion to weep. Then taking her mother aside, he said, "I wish you to be civil to these gentle-

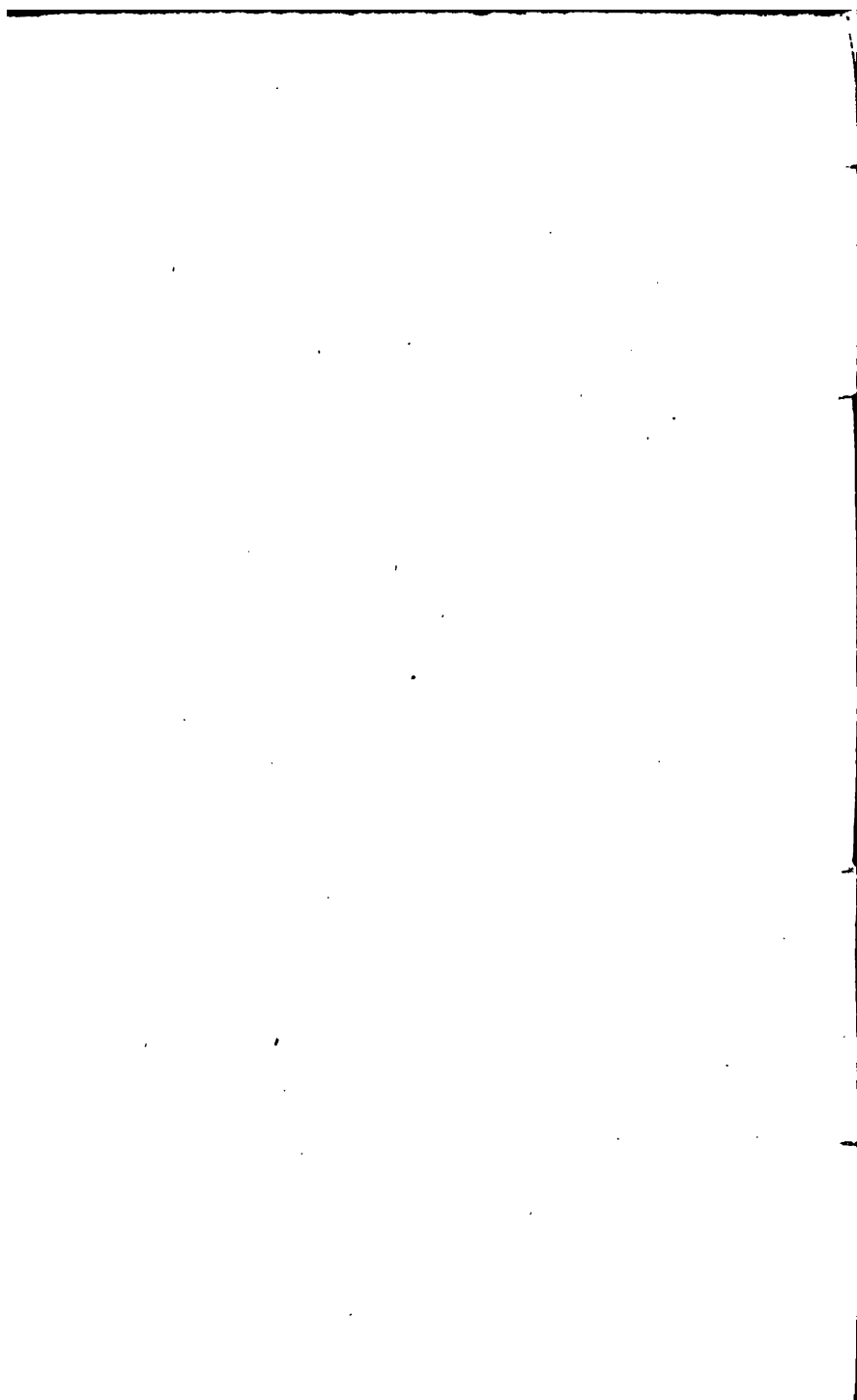
men: invite them to your house; let your daughter entertain them like other company, and contrive that they shall sup together. Moreover, observe my commands in every thing I shall direct, and despair not, for we will secure the future happiness of your daughter. But breathe not a word of what I say to you; if you have the weakness, like most women, to talk of your own affairs, and let my name appear in this, ill betide the fortunes of your family, for you will forfeit my favour, and the dowry which it is my intention to bestow upon your daughter, and remain in greater disgrace than before. Be secret, therefore, and let me hear from you on the occasion I have mentioned."

In obedience to the duke's wishes, the lady put the whole affair into train; and one day as the fair girl sat binding her hair upon the sunny side of a gentle hill, lying beyond her flower garden, she perceived the two cavaliers approaching her. They saw, and accosted her, while her mother received them with cheerful looks at the door, and inviting them in, proceeded to regale them in the best style she could. In the mean time she informed the duke of their arrival, who, accompanied by a few select officers, directly set off, and joined the lady at her house. Soon after alighting, he took occasion to entreat the lady

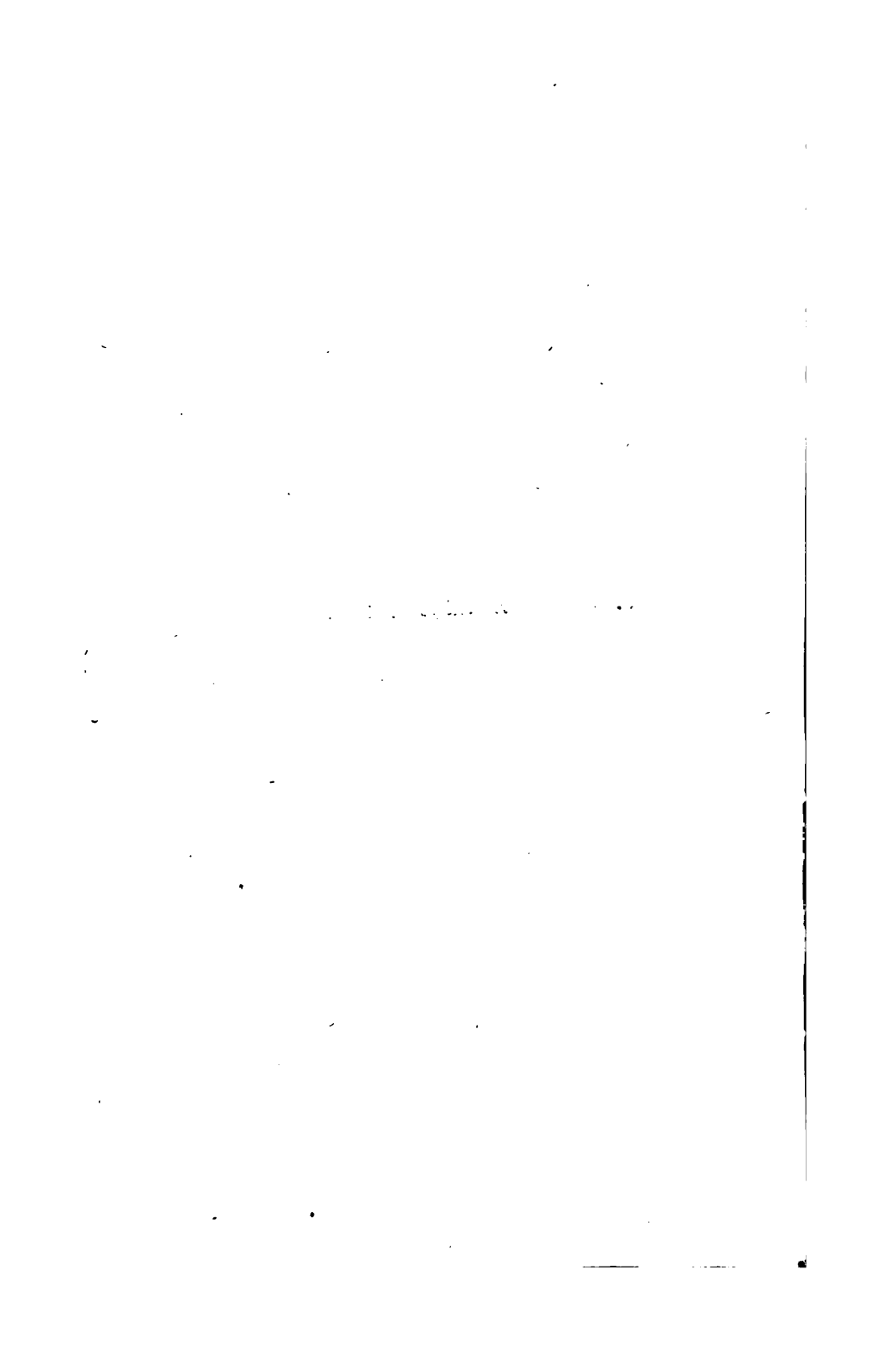
to shew him through her mansion. This she was apparently compelled to do ; and when they approached the apartment where the party were supping together, she affected to turn his excellency aside, observing aloud, "There is nothing further worthy of your excellency's notice ; a mere lumber room."—"But I will see it, nevertheless," interrupted his grace, "I will see it ;" and suddenly opening the door, he beheld his two courtiers, with the lovely girl seated between them, enjoying themselves in the best style, and imagining, in their conceit, that they were now equally acceptable to both the ladies of the house. "Good night, my lords," cried the duke, "I wish you joy ; you seem extremely comfortable here." They both directly rose in the utmost confusion at the sight of the duke, while the timid girl, unable to contend with her feelings, burst into a flood of tears. "Weep not," said the duke to her, in a gentle voice, "good girls are always to be found at home ; they do not run after courtiers to other people's houses ; you confer honour upon your household by staying where you are." Though there was a tone of irony in this, followed by some severe yet well meant reflections and advice, he mingled with them so much gentleness and pity, that she thanked him even in her tears. He then declared that he had come for the sole purpose of

bestowing her hand in marriage, and of conferring on her a dowry of five hundred crowns. Turning next towards one of his first officers, he continued, "Would you deign to accept this gentleman as your husband? Does he please you?" Drooping her fair head, unable for some minutes to reply, she could only at length sob out: "No, no husband, but he who promised to take me as his wedded wife."—"What," said the duke, "are you then already married?"—"This, my lord, is the gentleman who gave me his vows and swore to make me his wife." The duke then turning round upon the courtier, with a noble and determined air, "If this be the truth," he continued, "how happens it that I find the lady in this house, and in company with this other gentleman at table? Wherefore does she not sit at your table? What am I to think of this?"—"He is my friend," said the guilty courtier, "he will witness for me"—but he stammered out only some unmeaning words, and stood covered with confusion as the duke proceeded; "And had you both forgotten that there was yet such a governor as Alexander de' Medici alive? that there was yet justice in the land? Speak, fair lady; which of these gentlemen do you fix upon as your lawful husband?"—"No other, so please your excellency," she replied, "but he who

has oftener promised to make me his."—"It is enough," continued the duke, "what you ask is only just; and to shew you that justice is one of the virtues that I love, receive this ring, signor, and espouse the young woman before my eyes. And you," he observed, addressing the courtier's companion, "will be kind enough to add to the lady's dowry, the sum of five hundred crowns, the same amount that I have myself given her." Then, having been witness to the marriage, he departed with the whole of his train, including the bridegroom's false friend, leaving the happy young bride and her husband in their mother's house.



Fables of Sebastiano Crizzo.



SEBASTIANO ERIZZO.

THIS writer was a Venetian gentleman and a senator, more distinguished, perhaps, for his antiquarian researches, and as the founder of the present system of studying ancient medals, than for his superior excellence as a novelist. A few stories, however, rather of an historical than an imaginary cast, are to be met with in his work of the *Sei Giornate*,* that may possess sufficient attractions for the genuine lovers of fiction. It made its first appearance under the auspices of the once celebrated critic Lodovico Dolce, to whom the author presented the MS., from which it was put forth at Venice.† Sebastiano was born on the 19th of June, 1525, and was the son of Antonio Erizzo, a distinguished senator, by a daughter of the Cavaliero Contarini. He pursued his studies in Greek and Roman literature at Padua, and afterwards devoted his whole attention to

* *Le Sei Giornate di Messer Sebastiano Erizzo*, date in luce da Messer Lodovico Dolce, all' Illustrissimo Signore Federico Gonzaga, Marchese di Gazuolo. *Venezia*, Gio. Varisco e compagni: 1567.

† Dolce's Dedicatory Epistle, dated Venice, June 15, 1567.

philosophy, in which, if we are to give credit to Dolce, he made a great proficiency, as his numerous Moral Tales, which he very properly so called, to distinguish them from the class of *Novelle*, sufficiently testify. In his commendations, however, both of their style and character, his friend Dolce would appear to have departed somewhat from his usual path as a critic, to enter upon the pleasanter duty of the panegyrist.

He, no doubt very conscientiously, announces, "that he should be defrauding the reader of much valuable moral improvement, and the author of his just fame, were he to deprive the world of the labours of so learned and distinguished a youth." But whatever allowance we ought to make for the praises bestowed upon a young acquaintance, by a critic to whom he presented his work, such is its remaining merit, as to induce the translator to present a few specimens of a production, which Dolce declares to be "in every point deserving of the very highest applause."

Erizzo bore the reputation of a good poet, as well as of a novelist, antiquary, and philosopher. He was entrusted with many important commissions by his country; sat in the Council of Ten; and died at the age of sixty, in Venice. Honourable mention is made of him by Crescimbeni and other literary historians.

SEBASTIANO ERIZZO.

NOVELLA XXV.

I RECOLLECT having once heard a Spanish gentleman, who had resided some time at the court of Portugal, relate a quarrel which took place there between a master of the king's bed-chamber, and one of the other courtiers. The former, whose name was Giovanni, believing himself slighted by his enemy, resolved to let no opportunity escape him of effecting a bitter revenge. And to such a length did his animosity proceed, that smarting under his imaginary disgrace, he contrived to surprise the other, sword in hand, and assassinate him while walking, in open day, a few miles out of the city of Lisbon. Having committed the act, he instantly fled beyond the confines of the kingdom, seeking shelter at Vilvao, in Biscay, his native place. The king, being greatly grieved to hear of the sudden and unhappy death of a courtier, whom he had long esteemed both for his pleasing manners and for his prowess in the field, commanded the strictest inquiries to be

instituted. Finding that Giovanni no longer made his appearance, no one hearing tidings of him, and the particulars of the previous quarrel being publicly known, his majesty was at no loss how to account for the assassination, which was soon after indeed ascertained to have been perpetrated by the hand of Giovanni. A heavy price was therefore imposed, by royal order, upon the criminal's head, as a reward to whomsoever would deliver him up, either dead or alive, into the hands of justice.

Now as soon as Don Pietro, steward of the royal household, heard the tenor of the proclamation, though he had formerly been greatly indebted, and even owed his life, to Giovanni, who had cleared him from some unjust accusations, for which he would otherwise have suffered; yet, unmindful of all the past kindness and obligations which he had received, and instigated by the amount of the reward, he was ungenerous enough to use every means of discovering his former friend's retreat. Accidentally hearing from an acquaintance, travelling from Biscay, that Giovanni had there sought refuge, he carefully concealed these tidings from the rest of the court; but took occasion, in an audience with the king, to acquaint him that he had at length discovered the place of his retreat; intimating that it would not be long before

he should present his majesty with the criminal's head. After receiving, therefore, full assurance of the promised reward, Pietro, being well armed and mounted, departed the next morning with all speed towards Biscay, and arriving within a few days at Vilvao, he secretly proceeded to discover traces of Giovanni. When he had succeeded in this object, he next took some apartments near his residence, where he determined to await a favourable occasion of carrying his nefarious project into execution. Unhappily for the object of his treachery, this was too soon afforded, Giovanni being engaged to go as far as the port of San Sebastian, where he was to await the arrival of one of his brothers, returning from a long voyage. The insidious Pietro observed the preparations for his departure, and suspecting that he was about to leave the city, resolved to keep him company, the better to effect his design. Watching the hour when he set out, shortly afterwards the traitor himself secretly took horse, and following some part of the way at a convenient distance, he at length perceived him approaching the foot of a high mountain. In a few moments he was at his side; and turning suddenly upon him, he seized the reins of Giovanni's horse, accosting him at the same time with a fierce and threatening aspect: "Stand, villain,

traitor as thou art, and yield me, as in spite of thee, thou shalt, thy coward life! Lo, thou art taken in the same snares which thou didst most maliciously and traitorously prepare for one of the noblest knights of Portugal; but thou shalt no longer live to boast thee of that vile and savage deed!" The wretched Giovanni hearing these words, while he recognized the features of his friend Pietro, with trembling and conscience-smitten voice, thus replied: "I know not, O Pietro, whether I ought to yield credit to my senses, and whether it can be really you whom I see before me, whose voice I hear, and whose hand I thus clasp in mine. An unhappy man am I, if you be no longer the same friend whom I once knew at the court of our monarch! Do I say friend? nay, my most dear and intimate companion, in whose love and honour I ever reposed the utmost trust: and more yet, whose very life I saved from the malice of enemies and the indignation of the king. Is it then, with such a countenance, with such words,—nay, look not thus fiercely on me,—that you repay all the favours I conferred upon you? Say, did you not once promise, in the fulness of your heart, grateful for the life you had received, to watch ever faithfully and fondly over mine? Could I even have dreamed that I had need to guard my bosom from the secret dag-

ger of one who, indebted to me for his life, had sworn to shield me from every harm? When did I in thought or word, since that time, offend you, that I should receive so bitter a recompense for all my love? I know not, unless you resent my having rescued you from an ignominious death. Yet common humanity, to say nothing of reason and gratitude, should lead you to take compassion on me, on my young wife, and infant boy, and not to think of depriving them of their only protector, in so savage a way. If you have a father, Pietro, then think of mine, whose sole support I am: he is bent down with grief and age; come with me, and restore me to him: let him not live to hear that you have cut me off in the summer of my days. Besides, I am going far, very far, to see one of my brothers, whom I had long wept as dead. He is but just arrived, and you will not refuse to let me behold him before I die. Nay, do not strike me: I am unarmed; but put yourself for a moment in my place, and then act as you would yourself be treated. Grant but my life, and my whole fortune shall be at your disposal. What gain, what triumph can be yours, to slay me thus unarmed? You say it was thus I slew my enemy; but he was not my friend, and by repeated insults he provoked his fate. He too would have

done the like by me, had not just heaven disposed it otherwise, and favoured the righteous cause. Venture not, therefore, to imbrue your hands in innocent blood,—nay, worse,—in the blood of your friend and benefactor, drawing down upon yourself the malediction of heaven and of mankind.” Here he ceased ; but the savage and avaricious Pietro, deaf to all his entreaties and to his last prayers for mercy, as if he took pleasure in prolonging his torment, having seized him by the throat, slowly raised his weapon, and proceeded to execute his ferocious purpose. Striking him a violent blow upon the neck, he half severed his head from his body, and repeating his strokes with the utmost fury on various parts of his person, he soon laid the unhappy Giovanni dead at his feet. With the same unrelenting ferocity, he then separated the head from the yet warm and reeking corpse ; and bearing it along with him, he hastened from that wild and terrific scene, with the feelings rather of a demon than of a man. Insensible as yet to the retributive pangs that awaited him, he took his dark and solitary way back to the Portuguese capital, accompanied only by the bloody witness of his crime, over lonely plain, valley, and mountain, heedless alike of the smiles or frowns of nature, and of the sleeping vengeance of the heavens above him.

He did not scruple to present the head of his friend at court, claiming the reward due for the death of a criminal, whom he boasted to have slain with his own hand. Nor did he for a long period seem at all troubled with the recollection of so foul an offence, though, doubtless, however slow, his punishment would be no less sure, either here or hereafter. For it is almost impossible, indeed, to estimate the iniquity of an action, which, added to its cold-blooded ferocity, involved such an extent of enormous and unexpected ingratitude.

NOVELLA XXXV.

At the period when the tyrant Nicocles swayed the sceptre of Sicyon, alike feared and hated by its citizens, two only were found, who equally distinguished by their rank, their wealth, and their spirit, disdained longer to bear the intolerable weight of his oppression. Surpassing their fellow citizens as well in courage as in rank, they were the first to conspire together how they might best achieve the freedom of their native place, though even by the death of its despotic ruler: aware that the seeds of liberty are best watered with the blood of its enemies. With this view, having fixed upon a certain hour and spot, they waited with much anxiety for the period of its accomplishment, but, seized with a sudden panic when the moment arrived, one of the two conspirators refused to proceed any further in the affair. Not satisfied with this, and afraid of being anticipated by his colleague, he went instantly to the palace of the tyrant, and the better to ingratiate himself, acquainted him with the whole transaction; effecting at the same time to have given ear to it only with a view of revealing the real author to the king, as was the duty

of every loyal subject. Having in this manner been made acquainted with the full particulars of the conspiracy, Nicocles, giving entire credit to the account, despatched forthwith a company of his guards to the residence of Timocrates, with orders to level the gates with the ground, and to bear the traitor alive into his presence.

The noble citizen was in this way seized and carried before the tyrant, who, having feasted his eyes with the sight of his victim, and thrown him into one of his most horrid dungeons, condemned him on the very same day to die. But, as it was the custom of those times, that such as were found guilty of capital crimes, should be executed during the night within the walls of their dungeon, when their cries could not be heard, Timocrates was thus condemned to suffer on the following evening. When tidings of this terrific punishment came to the ears of his poor consort, Arsinoe, who was most tenderly attached to her husband, so great was her surprise and terror, as well nigh to deprive her of existence. On recovering sufficiently to dwell upon the dreadful subject, she long revolved every means that her affection could suggest, of averting so heavy and unexpected a calamity. She well knew, how worse than unavailing it would be to pour her prayers and tears at the feet of

the tyrant, a measure that might crown their sufferings, by bringing along with it the dishonour as well as the death of her husband. She resolved then, to think and to act only for herself; and it was not long before her ingenuity supplied her with an idea, which with fearless breast she prepared to carry into speedy effect. On the evening that her consort was to suffer, no sooner was it twilight, than wrapping herself in a dark cloak, and veiling her beauty in deep black crape, she took her fearful and solitary way, without acquainting a single friend with her purpose, towards the dungeon prepared for the tomb of all she held most dear. On her arrival, taking aside one of the guards, she besought him, bitterly weeping while she spoke, to permit her to see her husband for a few moments before he died, and to yield her the sad consolation of a last tear, a last embrace, without which they should neither of them die in peace. Touched at her deep and passionate distress, the rest of the guards gathered round her, and unable long to resist her entreaties, they all of them, catching the soft infection from each other, at length agreed to let her pass.

On beholding her husband, however, instead of longer giving way to womanly lamentations and tears, Arsinoe assumed all the fortitude of a heroine, boldly yet sweetly advising and consoling him, while she

entreated him no longer to despair. Then, hastily acquainting him with her plan, she began to array him in her own dress, and having disguised his face in the thick veil, and thrown the cloak over his shoulders, she took one kiss, breathed a soft farewell, and quietly assumed his place. The guards, believing that it was the lady returning, apparently drowned in grief, offered no sort of opposition; and in a little while Timocrates was beyond the limits of the tyrant's sway. But the hour was come, when the executioner proceeded with the guards to receive his victim from their hands, bearing along with him the infernal implements of his trade. What was their surprise, on approaching nearer, to lay their unhallowed hands upon a gentle and beauteous lady, who was immediately borne by the executioner into the tyrant's presence, to learn in what way he was to proceed. Here she was received with scowling and terrific looks, while she appeared wholly unable to answer the threats and inquiries of the incensed prince. Vainly attempting to hide her terror, she again and again burst into tears whenever she prepared to speak, so as even to awaken some touch of compassion in the tyrant's obdurate breast. "Be not so much alarmed, lady," he continued, in an altered tone: "what is it you fear? only reveal the real motives which led you

to set my power at defiance, to rescue my prisoner, a traitor doomed to death, and to deceive my guards?" — "Neither," replied Arsinoe, "was it to defy your power, nor to deceive your officers; it was love, only love and pity for my unhappy husband that impelled me to it; and I would hazard much, much more, even more than life itself, did I possess it, for his sake. When the fearful tidings burst upon me, when I heard that he was condemned to suffer an ignominious death, and when I reflected upon his whole life and conduct, nor found the slightest cause for blame, or for your princely displeasure, I was determined to peril every thing for his rescue. This I have done, and succeeded: and I willingly yield me a victim, if such I must be, in his place. Yet I would still hope that you will not behold my affliction and my tears unmoved; but attribute all my error and my crime to the tender love I bore him, a love which grew up with our earliest years, and which is such that you must tear away my heart-strings before I can quietly see him perish. Surely then you cannot pretend to exercise any law against true and devoted affection: severe as you are esteemed to be, you would not punish me for feelings over which I have no control."

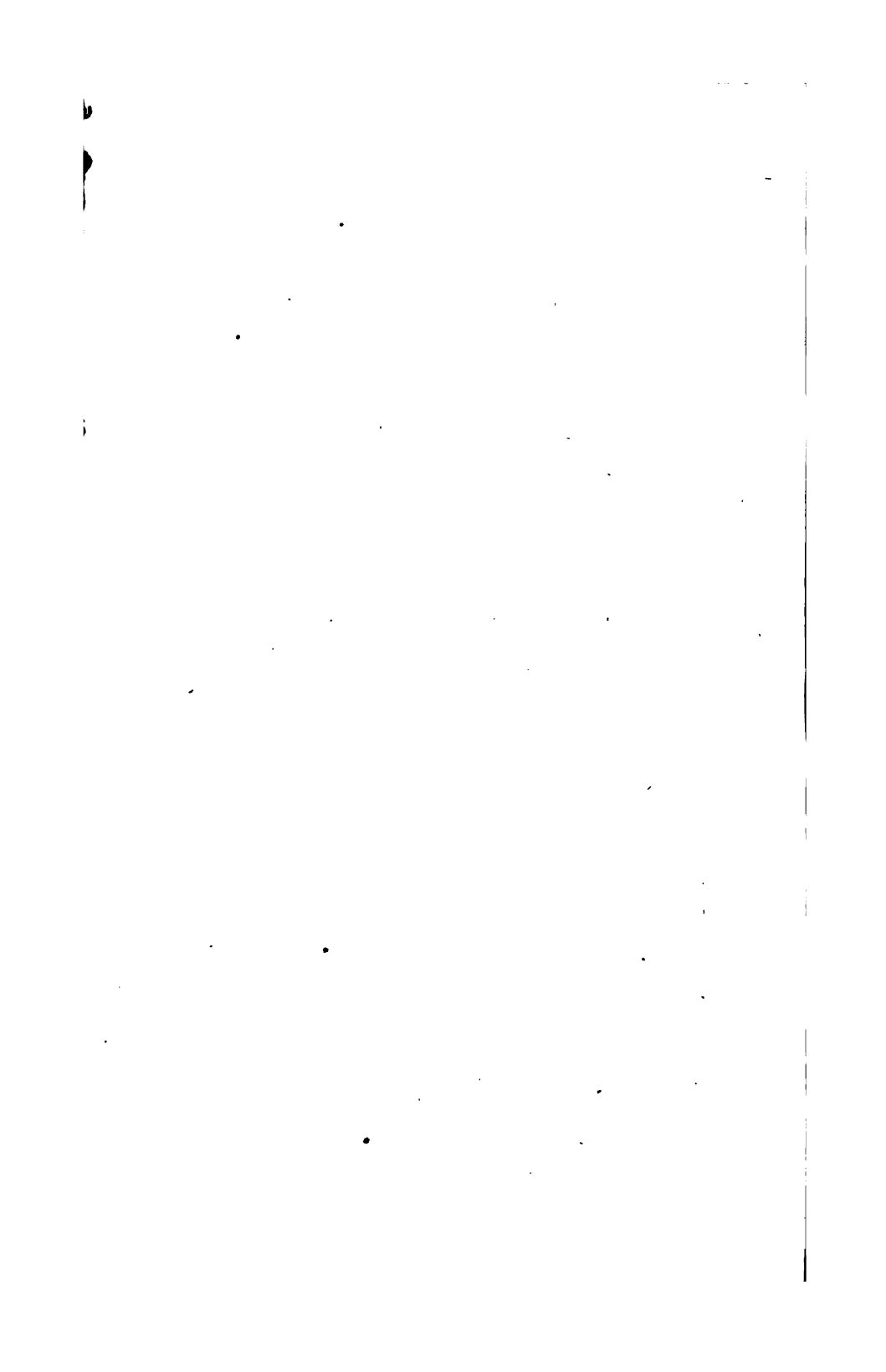
Such was the affecting appeal of the wretched Ar-

sinœ, which produced so extraordinary an effect upon the mind of Nicocles, that, cruel and unforgiving as he naturally was, and vehemently exasperated against Timocrates in particular, he yet felt his fury and indignation die away within him at the sound of her mournful words. He, therefore, admitted her conjugal affection to be a sufficient justification of her conduct, and dismissed her uninjured from his presence. But not so fortunate were the guards, whose humanity was deserving of a better fate. Against them his wrath burned with unmitigated fury. "And now seize me those caitiff villains," cried the tyrant, "who, false to their trust, permitted access to my prisoner: their blood be upon their own heads; for I will never consent to be thus wholly cheated out of my revenge;" and the unhappy guards were accordingly led to execution by the hired mercenaries of the tyrant. In the course of a short time, Arsinoe, having obtained tidings of her husband, disguised herself in male attire, and accompanied by a single faithful servant, fled secretly from her house, and joined the object of her love in a distant and secure retirement.

Novels of Niccolò Granucci.

VOL. III.

O



NICCOLO GRANUCCI.*

THE family of this novelist, becoming partizans of the Guelf faction, were banished early in the fourteenth century from Lucca. Afterwards, on its restoration, it became very powerful, various branches spreading throughout the different states of Italy. From some circumstances, indeed, connected with the fortunes of his family, Granucci is said to have derived many of his stories, expressly stating in his work, as we learn from Mr. Dunlop,† that when on a visit to Sienna, in 1568, he availed himself of the occasion to reach the little town of Pienza, in the vicinity, for the purpose of inquiring whether there were any descendants of the family name remaining in those parts. He then goes on to relate, that two very respectable citizens bore him company to a monastery in the neighbourhood of Pienza, whence he

* *La piacevol Notte e lieto Giorno, Opera Morale di Nicolao Granucci di Lucca, indirizzato al molto Magnifico e Nobilissimo Sig. M. Giuseppe Arnolfini, Gentiluomo Lucchese. Venezia, appresso Jacomo Vidali, 8vo. 1574.*

† *History of Fiction*, vol. ii. p. 469.

subsequently proceeded to visit the Villa di Tojano, in company with one of the monks, who relates a variety of stories, and presents him, likewise, on parting, with a MS., which furnished him with the materials from which he compiled his work, and which, the author in his preface declares, "well merited the title of *Selva di varia lesione*." Though the style of this writer can by no means boast the ease and elegance of some of the earlier novelists, it is nevertheless, for that age, extremely good. For being an avowed imitator and admirer of Boccaccio, he was at the pains of rendering his *Teseide*,* from *ottava rima* into prose; a task which fully entitled him, we think, to claim some acquaintance with the taste and purity of that writer's language.

He flourished about the year 1570. His moral work, entitled, "*La Piacevol Notte e Lieto Giorno*," the Delightful Night and Pleasant Day, made its appearance, with the date of 1574, at Venice.

* *La Teseide* di M. Giovanni Boccaccio, &c., di ottava rima nuovamente ridotta in prosa per Nicolao Granucci di Lucca, &c. Lucca. Presso Vincenzo Busdraghi: 1579.

NICCOLO GRANUCCI.

NOVELLA I.

IN the magnificent city of Ferrara, about the time of duke Borso, dwelt a noble youth of the name of Polidoro. Becoming deeply attached to one of the most beautiful girls in the whole place, he had soon the happiness of acquiring such an interest in her affections, as to induce her to yield her consent to a speedy union. As she had numerous other suitors, however, of whom Polidoro was extremely jealous, she was persuaded, in order to allay his apprehensions, in the mean time, unknown to her friends and family, to give him frequent meetings, in one of which he prevailed upon her to accept the marriage ring from his hand, as a pledge of his honourable views. Having then taken leave of each other, the promised bride retired to rest; but soon after midnight she was awoke, and imagined she heard some one entering her chamber window: she arose; and beheld by the light of the moon, one of the most daring of her rejected lovers, who had already made good his en-

trance. Having only a single moment to decide how she could best defend her menaced honour, which she was aware she should equally forfeit by giving vent to her cries, she seized a weapon which lay near her, and smote the youth so severely on the temples, that he immediately fell headlong to the ground, at the very moment when he fancied he was about to succeed in his attempt. His cries drawing the officers of justice to the spot, a strict search took place, during which, the unfortunate Polidoro, being the only person found near the place, was forthwith seized, upon suspicion of having assassinated his rival, and was thrown into the public prison.

Fearful only of casting the least imputation upon the reputation of her he loved, he at once admitted the charge of having perpetrated the deed, a supposed crime for which he was adjudged to suffer death. Tidings of the unhappy result of this affair coming, the ensuing day, to the ears of his betrothed bride, she hesitated not an instant in what way to act. Heedless of consequences, she set out for the palace of the duke, where, half wild with grief and terror at the idea of her lover having already suffered, she became clamorous for an audience, the people on all sides making way for her, until she was at length stopped by the officer upon guard at the ducal gates.

Her passionate appeals, however; for admittance were here irresistible, and she was conducted in a short time into the audience chamber, before the duke and his whole court. But regardless of surrounding objects, she singled out him of whom she was in search, and throwing herself at his feet in all the sweet disorder of distressed beauty, which heightened rather than diminished her charms, she besought his clemency and pity in the following terms : " Heaven, that has given me access to your excellency, will, I fervently trust, incline your heart also to listen to me, to listen to justice and to truth. Let not the innocent, my honoured lord, suffer for the guilty ; the cause for which I appear before you, however much it may seem to reflect upon myself, will not permit me to be longer silent. Believe me, then, when I say that the prisoner Polidoro and my unhappy self have been long, though secretly, betrothed to each other, and we were on the eve of becoming united, when the deceased youth, for whose death he has been made responsible, urged by envy and disappointment, had the shameless audacity to make attempts upon my honour, by stealing his way into my chamber by night. At the same hour came my betrothed husband, whom I had consented to meet, in

order to arrange measures of reconciliation with our friends, as well as to obviate the effects of some ungrounded jealousy in regard to the deceased, which had been some time before preying upon his mind. And for this reason only had I consented to unite my fate with his, before we had succeeded in obtaining the favourable decision of our friends. We had scarcely taken leave of each other, when, on retiring to rest, I was soon after startled out of my slumbers by hearing the sash of my chamber window open, and beheld with terror the head of the deceased, who had succeeded in scaling the walls, and was about to invade the sanctuary of my rest. Impelled at once by fear and indignation, I snatched the sword that I have long kept near my couch, and struck the invader of my honour with the utmost strength I could command. He fell to the ground, and by the just award of heaven, rather than by any power of mine, he shortly afterwards expired.

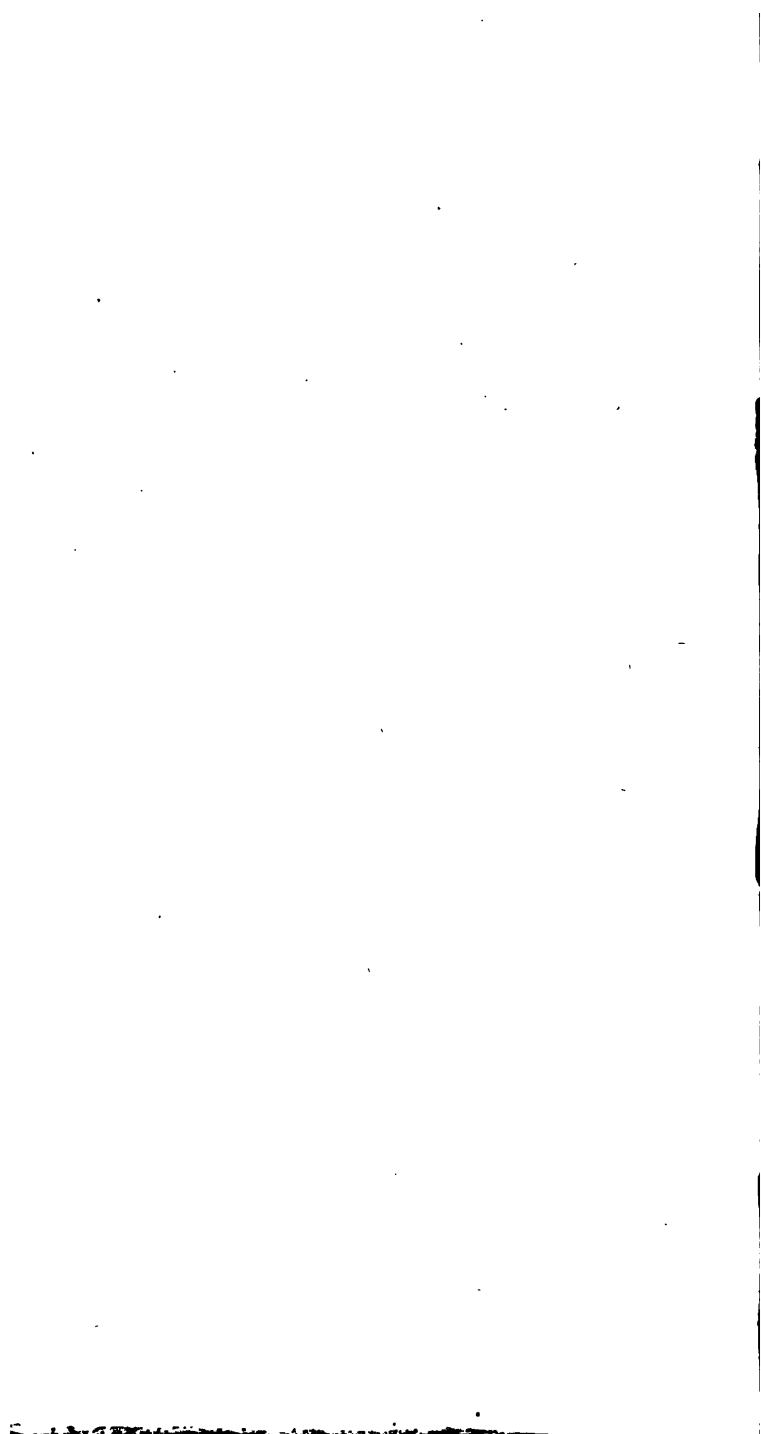
“In the tumult thus caused, it was not long before the captain of the band with his followers rushed towards the spot. What was my surprise and horror, then, to hear this very morning that my beloved and innocent Polidoro had been just seized, convicted, and lay under sentence of death, preferring rather to

suffer every thing than even to betray my name. Deserted, alone, and fearful of confiding the circumstances of our union to any ; fearful even of the jealous reproaches of my Polidoro, to whom or whither could I turn for advice and aid—whither, I repeated in my despair, but to the source of honour and justice itself, at the feet of our most noble and righteous duke ?”

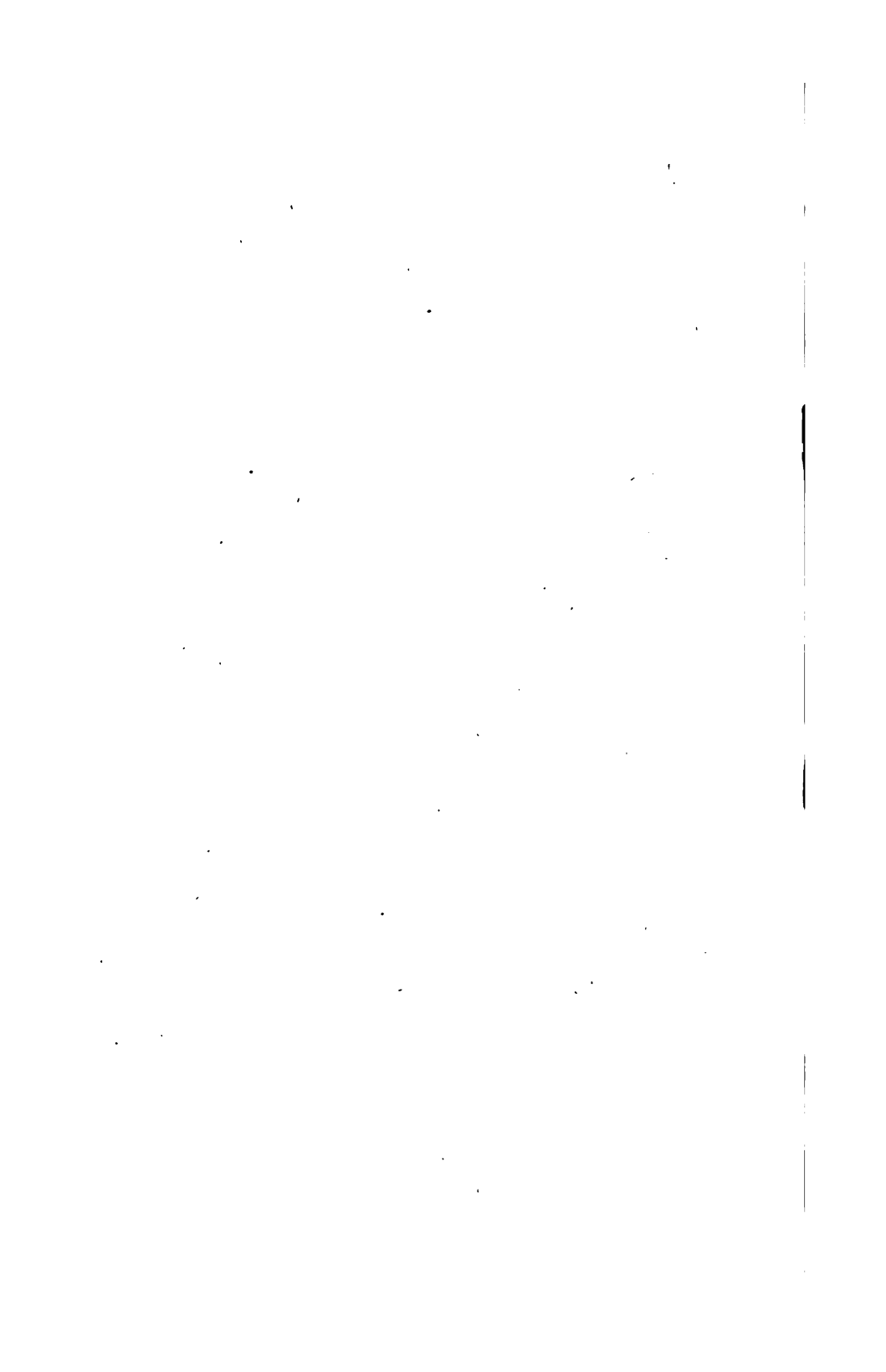
Here, no longer able to control her emotions, the lovely Ortensia ceased to speak, but not to weep, until the duke kindly raising her up, and assuring her she had no cause for such excessive sorrow, as far as it lay in his power to remove it, she attempted to recover her composure. “ But is he free ? is he pardoned ?” inquired the anxious girl, with breathless haste, almost resisting his efforts to raise her from the ground. “ Yes, yes, you are both free,” rejoined the duke, with one of his most benevolent and irresistible smiles ; “ you are both free to be as happy as you please, and, as I doubt not, you deserve to be, as far as my influence, at least, with both your parents, can be supposed to be of any avail. For it is impossible that I should not believe what you say ; your words and looks have the stamp of truth impressed upon them ; and the only part of

the affair, I think, which we have to regret, is your surpassing loveliness and worth, which doubtless led to the fatal enterprize of the poor enamoured boy. You have taught others, however, by his fate, fair lady, to keep a more respectful distance ; and we are far from wishing to find fault with you for shewing the courage of the heroine as well as the affection of the woman. You have our full approbation and respect." But the scene which she had now gone through, and even supported, until the duke ceased to speak, with so much animation and courage, was too affecting to be longer borne ; she gazed timidly around the court, and hearing some murmurs of applause as the duke concluded, aware that the eyes of numbers were upon her, all her womanly feelings, all her sensibility and delicacy, came into sudden play ; she grew pale, she trembled, and the next moment fainted in the duke's arms. " I trust we have done no mischief here," he continued, as he himself bore her, followed by the princesses, into another saloon ; " she will recover, and we will all of us yet be present to grace her approaching nuptials." And our noble duke performed what he had thus promised ; for he himself saw and reconciled the rival families : and as he

watched the hand of the bright Ortensia conferred upon the happy Polidoro, he observed to one of the courtiers near him, "I think she did well to put the other poor fellow first out of his pain; he could not have borne this."



Robels of Ascanio Mori da Ceno.



ASCANIO MORI DA CENO.*

ALTHOUGH an accomplished writer, a soldier, and a scholar, Mori does not stand in the first rank of the novelists of the sixteenth century, subsequent to which period few good writers of Italian fiction have flourished. He was by birth a Mantuan, and spent the greatest part of his life in the service of the princes of the house of Gonzaga. One of the members of this family he accompanied into Hungary, with the view of assisting the emperor Maximilian against the Turks, in his campaigns with the famous Solyman. He next entered into the service of Venice, as a volunteer, in its wars with the same power. From these circumstances, and the dedication of his novels to Vicenzo Gonzaga, prince of Mantua, we gather that he wrote towards the close of the sixteenth century. He proposed a second series of his stories; but these, as far as can be ascertained, he either never produced, or never published. Each novel is introduced with a

* *Prima Parte delle Novelle di Ascanio Mori da Ceno.* Mantua, Francesco Osanna, 8vo. 1585.

poetical address to some prince of the houses of Gonzaga or of Medici, in the form of a madrigal or a sonnet; for which, however, he does not seem to have been indebted to the pen of his friend, Torquato Tasso, with whom he is said to have been very intimate. An interesting letter, indeed, written by the great poet to the novelist, is yet extant, an extract from which is given in Mr. Black's "Life of Tasso." Mori is by no means so voluminous a writer as many of his contemporaries, the number of his stories not exceeding fifteen: these are dedicated to his patron, Vicenzo Gonzaga, the prince who so basely assassinated the Admirable Crichton. The third in the series is a story, to be found in the following selection, of a messenger, travelling post with a pardon for a criminal; but stopping to observe the whole process of an execution just as he arrived, he does not deliver his message until all is over. Many of his novels are supposed to consist of real incidents, often very minutely described, with particular allusion to the time and place, though he affects to disguise the names, *per convenienti rispetti*,—for good reasons. This he takes care to repeat in several of his historical tales, shewing from various little circumstances, that he was well acquainted with the parties. Thus in his fourth novel, of Giulio

and Lidia, he observes in regard to his heroine, after omitting the place of her residence, *per convenienti rispetti*, that he does not know whether to rank her among the downright plain or the beautiful; but that if all the handsome women were to be banished, she would run very little risk. The same might be observed of his eighth novel, and many others, all which, we may add, are distinguished for their humour and for the easiness of their style.

ASCANIO MORI DA CENO.

NOVELLA II.

THERE once dwelt in our good city of Mantua, a certain Messer Maffeo Strada, an elderly gentleman of very unobjectionable manners, and well to do in the world. But, though extremely active and vigilant in his affairs, he was not forgetful of his social duties, inasmuch as having lost his own wife and family, he took into his charge an orphan nephew, for the purpose of supplying the place of his parents, and educating him in a manner befitting his birth. When he found that the boy discovered little turn for letters, his kind uncle very properly took him away from school, with the intention of devoting him to mercantile affairs, until he should be able to enter upon his own concerns. And such was the young man's prudence and discretion, that he quickly imbibed the habits of business practised by his patron, insomuch as to excite the admiration and surprise of all his friends and acquaintance. On this account he daily gained ground in the good graces of his uncle, who began to

regard him with as much pride and pleasure as if he had been his own son. On the other hand, the young man always shewed his uncle the respect due to a father ; and so great was his mercantile proficiency, that when the old gentleman was seized with a series of tertian ague-fits, he was absolutely competent to take upon himself the charge of the office. Still his uncle's fits were a source of great disquietude to him, and he spared no pains and expense to restore him to his usual excellent state of health. The care of young Federigo, therefore, for by this name he had been christened, soon placed old Messer Matteo on his legs again, which were directly employed to bring him down as fast as possible to his counting-house, where his nephew received him at the head of all the clerks with three commercial cheers, evincing the greatest satisfaction in the world, while the news diffused a placid joy over the countenances of all the jobbers in the city. He was still, however, advised by his doctors to adhere for a period to his gentle soporific and perspiring draughts, in order, as they assured him, to carry off the dregs of his disease, under which discipline he remained somewhat weak and querulous.

His careful nephew, unacquainted with this last prescription, one morning went into his room to con-

sult him on some affairs, and was surprised to find him buried under an enormous load of bed-clothes, just as he was beginning to promote the medicinal warmth. He had closed his eyes, and lay perfectly quiet, invoking the moisture to appear, with all a patient's anxiety and fervency of feeling, which cannot endure the least interference with the grand object he has in view. The careful nephew approached on tip-toe, fearful of rousing his good uncle too suddenly, and was concerned to behold him lying apparently in so piteous a plight. Anxious lest he had met with a relapse, he began to accuse himself of not having been sufficiently careful in preventing him from resuming business too soon. The old gentleman at first laughed a little on hearing his over-scrupulous observations; then he became rather uneasy at his repeated inquiries and lamentations over him; and lastly, he was afraid that this untimely interruption might check the course of the fluids, without in the least benefitting the solids, respecting both of which he had lately become very particular. In fact he began to fear that the necessary perspiration would be stopped, which, next to the stopping of the firm, was the thing he most dreaded in the world. When his careful nephew, therefore, again began to hint his precautions that he

should not enter too soon into the office, the patient said in a somewhat angry tone: "For God's sake, get you gone; your lamentations make me quite sick; I tell you I am only taking a sweat."—"But I am sorry to think you have got a relapse; what can be the occasion of it? Do let me consult the doctor about it, for it were better to take it in time;" and so saying, he was hastening out of the room. No longer able to control his temper, and too impatient to explain, yet dreading to rise in a state of incipient perspiration, the old merchant raised his voice as loud as he dared, crying, "Don't go to the doctor, I say, and a plague upon you; only go out of the room." Upon this the young man, approaching nearer, and marking his uncle's rising colour, who at the same time bestowed the most abusive epithets upon him, began to think he was a little touched in the head, and that there was the greater occasion for a sharp leech the more he asserted the contrary. As he stood in a thoughtful posture, with his eyes fixed on the inflamed countenance of his uncle, the calmness of his manner, and his fixed resolution of calling a physician, so incensed the latter, that he suddenly burst into a violent rage, threatening not only to cut him off without a farthing, but to knock his brains out instantly if he ventured to provoke him more; for which pur-

pose he would rise, though he was in a beautiful perspiration. These words now confirmed the young gentleman's suspicions that something was wrong in his uncle's upper regions, being quite unlike himself, and he began to lament his situation louder than ever, ending with prayers and ejaculations for a physician. The uncle upon this put his threats into execution, leaping suddenly from his bed, while Federico, on the other hand, believing him to be seized with a delirious paroxysm, ran towards him to keep him down, lest he should commit some horrible mischief. Escaping, however, from his hands, the enraged patient endeavoured to seize a large cudgel which he kept in the room, a design against which the young gentleman exerted himself to the utmost of his power. A sharp contest for the possession of the stick now took place, sometimes inclining to one side, sometimes to the other; though the youth, believing his uncle endowed with the supernatural strength of a lunatic, was frequently on the point of being overcome. His great object was to secure the patient before he succeeded in obtaining the cudgel, and inflicting the severe castigation which he threatened; and, gathering strength from his despair, he began to press Messer Maffeo very hard, who, engaging in his night-cap and gown, certainly fought at a great dis-

advantage. His breath began to grow short, and his strength to fail, and no longer able to utter a word, he fairly yielded to his adversary. The latter not venturing to let a madman loose, held him firmly down, pinioning his hands behind him, and fixing his knees upon his stomach. When he had at length bound him, hand and foot, the careful nephew again commenced his lamentations over him, regretting that so sensible a man should have run mad so suddenly. On this his uncle beginning to grin and shew his teeth, he very calmly buried him under a heap of bed-clothes, and locking him up fast in the chamber, went to consult a physician. The doctor, being just on the point of visiting one of the young princes at the court, had only time to advise the careful nephew to apply a couple of sharp blisters upon his uncle's shoulders, and he would endeavour to call upon him in the evening. He would then, if necessary, order him something of a still more caustic nature, and bleed the patient copiously. For there was nothing, he said, like meeting the evil in the beginning, and applying the remedies while the patient had strength to bear them. The anxious Federigo accordingly hastened to the surgeon's house, and finding him, unluckily for his uncle, at home, he took him, armed with lancet and blisters, along

with him. Proceeding with all haste, they soon arrived at the patient's residence, the young man relating by the way the whole of his late engagement, as a clear proof of the patient's lunacy. The ancient housekeeper met them at the door, crossing herself devoutly, and shedding tears, as she repeated further instances of the insanity of her poor master, who had never ceased to bite and kick, and roar most outrageously, since his nephew had left the house.

And indeed well he might, for instead of being allowed to rise and attend to business, as usual, he found himself violently provoked, assaulted, bound down, like a felon, and locked up as in a cage; and all by his prudent, careful nephew. Such a case was enough to have driven Solomon himself out of his wits, to say nothing of a man of business; and by the time his persecutors approached the chamber, the violence of his proceedings certainly afforded strong presumptive evidence against him. When they appeared in his presence, however, he grew more furious than before. "What, in heaven's name, must we do?" cried his nephew. "Let us stay till he has worn himself out, and the paroxysm is somewhat abated; we can then apply our caustics," said the barbarous leech, "without fear of risk."—"No, I

think we had better begin now," replied the careful nephew, "let us lose no time; for he will do himself some injury if we permit him to go on thus. Follow me, and do not be afraid; for I think I shall manage him better this time," continued our young hero, with the utmost coolness; "and when once I have pinioned down his arms, you may seize him by the legs."—"But he is mad, quite mad," cried the surgeon, "let him alone, I say: when the frenzy subsides, you will find he will go to sleep, and we can seize him then." Such in fact was shortly the case, for wearied with his violent efforts and exertions, the poor man, soon after they retired, threw himself exhausted upon his couch, and fell into a sound sleep. But he was not long permitted to enjoy it; for the wily leech then addressing his nephew, said: "Now is the time: he is in a deep slumber, and what we have to do let us do quickly."—"Softly, softly," said the careful Federigo, as he laid hands upon the poor merchant, "there, I have him now; bring the blisters, and a bason for the blood, before he is well awake."—"Murder! help, help! for heaven's sake, help!" cried the patient, suddenly awakening, and beholding the fell surgeon approaching with the lancet and bason in hand; but vain were his cries; vain all his efforts to extricate himself from his impending fate. The more

he struggled, the more did Federigo think it his duty to use prompt remedies, and Messer Maffeo shortly lay as helpless as a new-born child. The surgeon, however, in securing his legs, had already received several severe contusions in the face; for which he was proceeding to take ample revenge in the blood of his enemy. At first, indeed, he thought of running away, but the young man encouraged him to do his duty, while the patient, on his side, exhibited symptoms of extreme rage and terror at his approach. The phlebotomist again advanced, and again drew back, like a spider that has got a wasp in his toils, holding his trenchant blade in his hand; nor was it until he was offered a double fee, that he flew at him, and, in spite of all his shrieks and struggles, fixed a deadly blister upon either shoulder. He next attempted to draw blood, the careful nephew holding the arm, while the surgeon, with the same caution, proceeded to pierce the vein; and having accomplished this, and applied some hot cataplasms to the soles of his feet, the man of blood departed. The patient now lay exposed to the rising pangs of the caustics, bound hand and foot. Growing hotter and hotter, they at length became so intolerable, that he declared he felt them eating his flesh away and drinking his blood: that gout and colic were a mere jest to them;

and that he would give up the whole of the business, and all he was possessed of in the world, if his cruel nephew would consent to release him. The latter, however, only thought it a further sign of madness, and proposed to adopt still stronger applications, saying to the servant in the presence of the wretched patient: "Run quick, as far as the surgeon's; bring a large blister for the head, and I will shave him myself." Bitterly now, did the poor merchant rue the hour when he admitted his careful nephew into his house, nor was it until he found all threats and imprecations vain, and after the blisters had done their work, that he succeeded, by dint of quiet reason and argument, in convincing the hopeful youth of the real state of the case, and that he had required nothing beyond a gentle sudorific.

NOVELLA III.

DURING the lifetime of Luigi Gonzaga, lord of Castel Goffredo, of distinguished memory, there flourished two very notorious rogues, who were among the most remarkable in all his dominions, for the number of their depredations : but whose ingenuity could not, at length, prevent their falling into the hands of justice. They were brothers, and natives of Cremona ; and such was their sense of their own enormities, that on being taken, they did not scruple to confess them, without awaiting the tardier process of torture. They may be said, therefore, to have been sentenced at their own desire, having given very sufficient reasons why they should suffer. Luckily, however, there was a certain Messer Pietro, a rich uncle of theirs, well stricken in years and somewhat infirm, who still retained such a regard for the honour of his family, that he did not altogether like the idea of seeing his nephews hanged.

Without staying, therefore, until he felt himself perfectly restored, for he still had a few twinges of the gout, he first lined his purse well with ducats, and then set out towards the seat of justice, deter-

mined to try whether they would have any efficacy in removing the stain which would otherwise infallibly attach to the family escutcheon. When he arrived at the place, he began by the usual methods of prayer and petition to beg the lives of his unlucky young relatives, a process which proved perfectly fruitless, inasmuch as the duke's love of justice was in exact proportion to his dislike of villains and his encouragement of honest men. Besides, he had put his hand to their sentence, and seemed resolved for once, right or wrong, that they should be shorter by the head, which had devised so many ingenious plans of mischief. Tears, and moans, and groans, were all richly lavished by the old man to no sort of purpose, until he had very nearly reached the day of execution, before he could prevail upon himself to change his measures, and resort to the more solid arguments he had brought in his purse. The duke had already been so much annoyed by him, that he always rode away on his approach ; yet wherever he happened to stop or turn, the old man was sure to intercept, to meet, or to attack him in his rear. Wearied at length with his importunities, the duke summoned his train, and rode away to hunt at Goito, not far from Mantua, where he understood that Duke Frederic II. was then engaged in the same sport. He was received by him

very graciously, and proved a very agreeable addition to the party, who indulged themselves in every kind of pleasure they could imagine; until one day, as they were issuing forth, the countenance of the wearisome old man again presented itself, and he began exactly in the same tone, with his petition, where he had before left off. Yes, he stood there on his gouty feet, but how he got there, nobody could tell, except the poor steed, which in his haste he had ridden to death by the way. So his excellency was here compelled to hold a fresh colloquy, which was lengthened by some of the courtiers, with whose easy consciences the bribes of the cunning old Cremonese had already been busy. Such was the effect, indeed, that they now began to support the old gentleman in his pretensions; observing first, that it was a sad pity, and then, as the duke took it easily, that it was a horrible piece of injustice, that two such fine young fellows should be hanged. In proportion as the good uncle plied them with ducats, they became more and more clamorous for mercy; insisting, among other things, that the two rogues had served like valiant soldiers in the duke's army, and deserved a better fate. For they knew that this would be a powerful plea with him; and such were, in short, the lies and impostures of all kinds which they succeeded in palming

upon their noble master, that he really began to think the prisoners were about to be very ill used, though they ought to have been executed long ago. They moreover lauded the duke for his great humanity, and as such sycophants are apt to do, they so completely won his ear by their vile flatteries, as to convince him that it would be one of the most pious acts in the world to revoke the sentence against two of the most accomplished villains in his dominions. Indeed he was glad to be able on any terms to escape the sight of the old man, and the worrying entreaties of his courtiers. The petitioner's ducats being well nigh exhausted, there was no time to be lost; for he knew that if he did not carry his nephews' pardon in his pocket before they were quite gone, the promises made would be void, and he should have the whole to pay over again. With his last bribe, therefore, he prevailed upon a wily courtier to procure an order, signed by the duke's hand, to the judge of the district, remitting the punishment for the sake of a slight fine, and having received the ducal seal, it was delivered to the troublesome old man. By this time, he was become nearly weary of his undertaking, and almost regretted, as he parted with his last *douceur*, that he had not left his hopeful

nephews to their fate. In fact, such was his chagrin, that he was seized with an acute fever, only the very day before the time appointed for their execution, while their pardon still remained in his pocket. What was now to be done? It was impossible he could reach the seat of justice himself; and in whom could he confide so precious a charge? On consulting the wily courtier, a messenger was pointed out to him; one of the most celebrated for swiftness of foot, and secrecy of despatch, among all the scouts at court. He was hired, therefore, at a moment's warning; while the sole consolation of the good uncle was the hope of living long enough to behold once more the faces of his wretched nephews, and of bestowing upon them a little dying advice.

Having given him, therefore, the most particular directions to lose no time upon the road, and even paid a sum in advance; the troublesome old gentleman awaited with some anxiety the news of his trusty messenger's return. He was to be at the place early the next morning, and to deliver the letter into the judge's own hands; after which he was to receive a further reward. Fired at this last idea, and eager to maintain his character as the most swift-footed Mercury at court, he posted away, without stopping until

he reached Castel Goffredo, where, taking a little repose, he proceeded early to the city gates, observing to the captain that he was on the duke's business, and must have his pass. Proceeding accordingly, he was just entering the great square, near the judge's house, when he was met by an immense concourse of people, in the midst of whom were the two identical prisoners, heavily chained, just going to the place of execution. How should the messenger, however, know this? He believed he was in very good time, and being quite unacquainted with the particular nature of the business, he determined to stop and watch the whole proceeding. Falling into the crowd, he approached the scaffold, saw them mount, and witnessed them take their final leave of the world; after which he proceeded very leisurely, with their pardon in his pocket, to the house of the judge. He congratulated himself by the way on the expeditious manner in which he had fulfilled the old man's commands, and presented himself with no little importance at the mansion of justice, expecting to receive a further fee, with many commendations for his celerity and despatch.

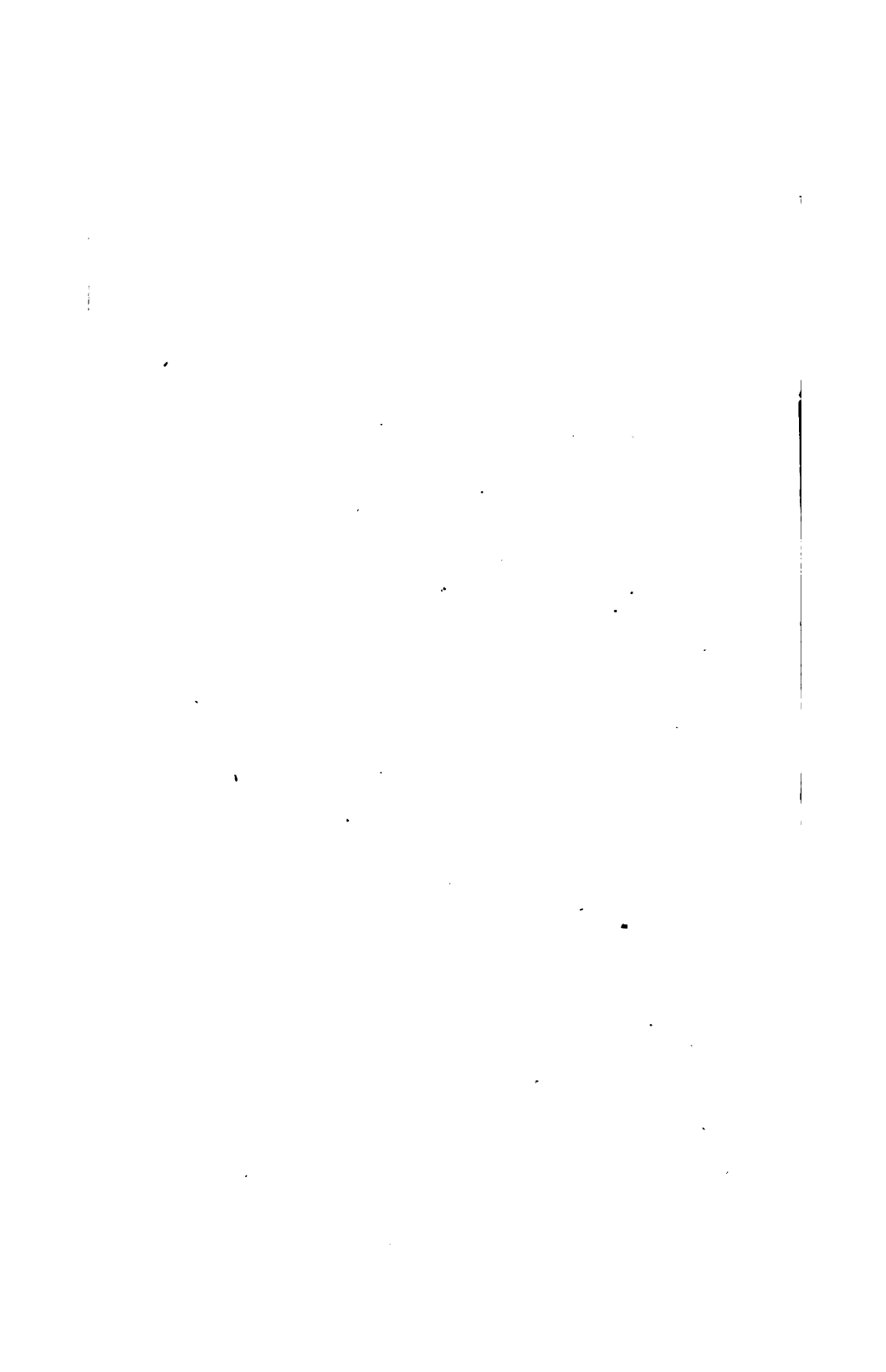
On opening the letter, and finding the nature of its contents, the judge uttered an exclamation of

surprise, watching the messenger attentively, and questioning him very narrowly as to the occasion of his delay. "Dolt, idiot, blunderhead," he exclaimed, "when did you set out from Goito?" "One hour before midnight; all in the dark, please your lordship; that is, I got my orders about that time, and set off at two." "You did, did you?" replied the other. "You are enough to make Solomon himself blaspheme; where did you stop, you most egregious fool?" "Stop, stop? I ran every mile of the way, please your lordship; and never stopped at all, except to see two robbers executed this morning, and I knew I could afford time for that." "Ah, villain, idle villain," returned the judge; "do you know you have been the death of both of them, and it were well if you could lose your head in their place:" and he proceeded to upbraid him in no very gentle terms, being really concerned at so untoward an accident; and, moreover, being, for a judge, very humanely inclined. In this last point, indeed, he was very unlike the generality of his learned brethren, who upon passing sentence before dinner, or in a bad humour, are very apt to make light of persons' lives. Our swift footed Mercury now found himself in a strange dilemma; for in place of being praised, as on former

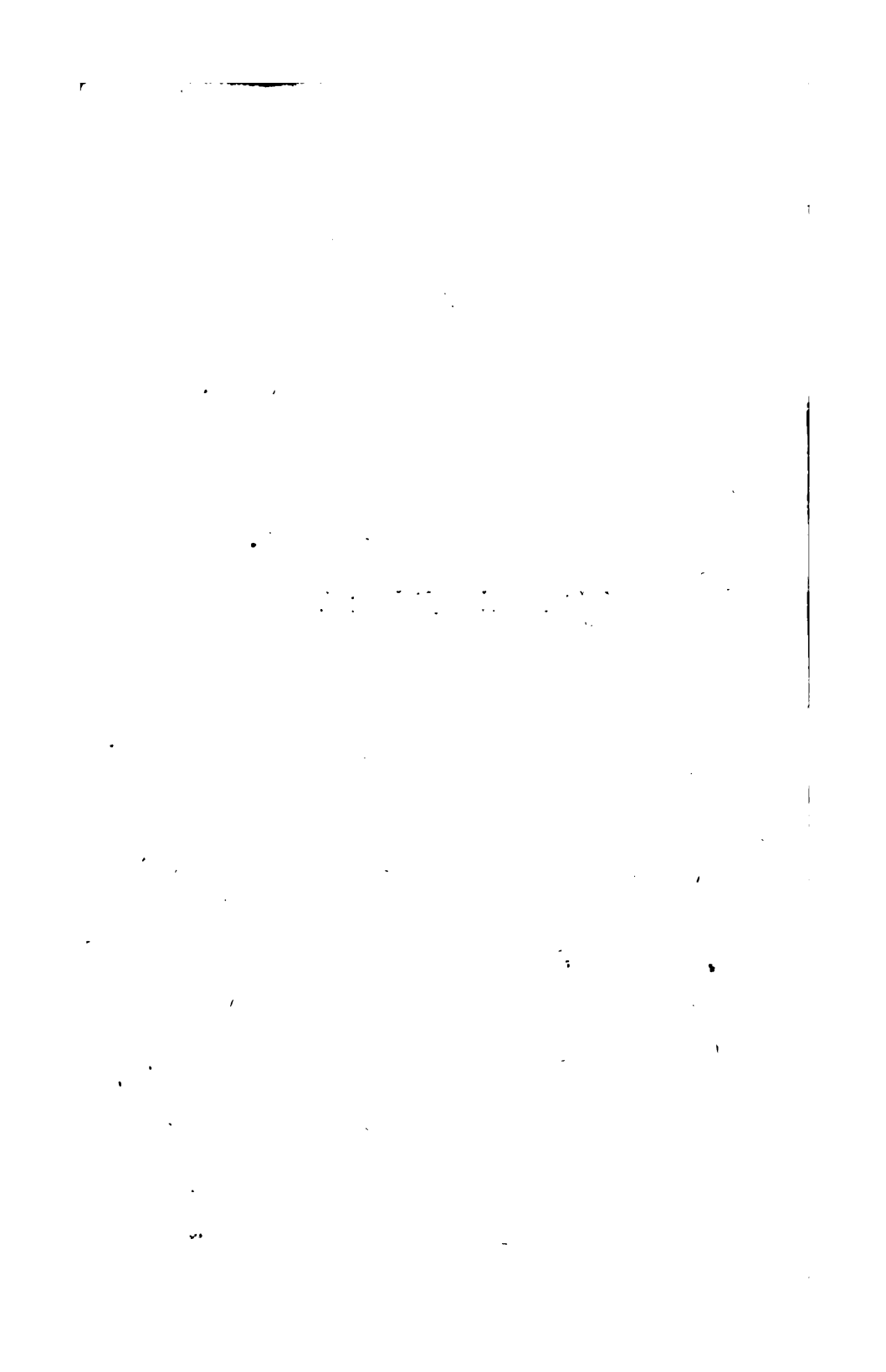
occasions, for his speed and alacrity, he only gained hard words ; his lordship threatening to make a severe example of him. His pride, however, was so much hurt in being reproached as an idle, lounging, slovenly sluggard, unworthy of the duke's confidence, or indeed of any thing but a halter, that he could no longer restrain his indignation. " My lord," he replied, " your lordship ought to speak within some bounds, and recollect that you are speaking to one of the best, nay, the very best and swiftest foot courier in the duke's service. Consider, I set out at midnight, and I got here before day-break this morning, stopping only, as I tell you, to see those two villains kicking their heels in the air ; and surely I had a right to have some little diversion, after running so many leagues so very fast. The old gentleman ought to have told me the particular business I was engaged for ; as it is, you see it is not my fault." " It is your fault, and I will make an example of you for it, sir : I will teach you a little more humanity, than to take a pleasure and lose your time in beholding tragedies of this kind." " Oh, lord, lord," cried the poor fellow, falling at the judge's feet, " forgive me this time, and I will never stop as long as I have breath again. Oh, oh ! I wish I had only known I was to save the poor, dear, innocent crea-

tures' lives, I would have been here before day-break ; I swear by my legs, I would." " Know? you rogue," echoed the judge, " did not you know it was a matter of life and death?" " No, my lord ; nobody told me any thing about that," cried the distressed courier. " Why, that something alters the aspect of the case, to be sure," said the judge ; " it will turn out to be the old gentleman's fault, I believe, after all." " And he will most likely be dead before I get back," cried the courier ; " so that there will be no need to tell him at all." " Aye, aye, you will finish him and all his relations, I dare say," said the judge ; " get away with you, rogue, and do not stop to see any body hanged by the way ; but it is all perhaps for the best, it is all in the hands of the Lord." And so in truth, it appeared to be ; inasmuch as neither of these devoted wretches were in the least deserving of pardon, and justly suffered the penalty of their manifold sins and offences. Of this his lordship took care to send a full account to the duke, regretting nevertheless, that, for once, it had not been in his power to comply with his excellency's commands, which he should have done, had they been arch fiends of mischief instead of common felons, by pardoning them, as he had wished. " The whole blame of the affair," he

said, "attached to the old uncle, who ought not to have entrusted so important a commission to the hands of an ignorant messenger, who instead of performing it, stopped by the way to see his nephews hanged."



Novels of Celio Malespini.



CELIO MALESPINI.*

CELIO MALESPINI, a Florentine gentleman, though said to have traced his birth to Milan, flourished about the middle of the sixteenth century. No writer of fiction produced more abundant specimens of the kind, nor more rude and unpolished, perhaps, in point of style. In this respect, indeed, his novels, amounting to two hundred, are said to be esteemed, in Italy, as complete examples of almost every fault of language and expression, to be avoided by writers of a pure taste. But his materials, and his skilful and humorous adaptation of them, are often excellent; while his harshness of phraseology will not be found to grate upon the ears of the English reader. The author feigns the relation of his novels to have taken place at a palace in the district of Trivigi, whither several ladies and gentlemen had resorted, to escape the ravages of the plague, then raging at Venice.

* *Ducento Novelle del Sig. Celio Malespini, nelle quali si raccontano diversi avvenimenti così lieti come mesti e stravaganti, &c.* 4to. Venezia, 1609.

This is known to have occurred in the year 1576; and from several circumstances related in the novels themselves, we may gather the date of their composition to have been not many years subsequent. A great portion are believed to have been founded upon real events; and in many instances, the mention of persons, and of particular times and places, is introduced. It is thus he alludes to Bianca Cappello, afterwards consort of Francesco de' Medici, grand duke of Tuscany, whose nuptials were celebrated in 1579, and are very minutely described by the novelist; and there is reason to believe that he wrote shortly after the period here alluded to.

Malespini entered into the service of the King of Spain, under the government of the Milanese, though in what capacity does not appear. Some particulars, however, may be gathered from Novel XI. Part II., in which he gives a description of the splendid nuptials of duke Guglielmo of Mantua, celebrated in the year 1561. He acquaints us that the Cavalier Lione Aretino and Luca Contile wrote, on this occasion, to the Marquess Pescara, entreating him to send them some gentleman of the Malespini family, in the service of king Philip, to assist them, as their particular friend, in a due preparation for the approaching solemnities. Most probably, this was no other than

their friend Celio, who seems to have contributed not a little to the humour of the scene. After holding a public office some time in the Milanese, Malespini proceeded to Venice, where he was residing at the time of the pestilence, which he describes in his forty-eighth Novel, Part I., as having laid desolate that beautiful city. There, with more fearful reality than that of De Foe, he kept a journal of the scenes he witnessed, which he transmitted to his brother Scipione. He displays in his writings an intimate acquaintance with the whole topography of the city of Venice, and also introduces persons speaking in the Venetian dialect, such as it was in use at the period when he wrote. Subsequently he passed into the court of Duke Francesco de' Medici, where he occupied the post of secretary. It is not with certainty known where, or in what manner, he terminated his days ; but what is more to the point, his stories are many of them amusing, and moreover curious in preserving some historical particulars deserving of record.

This notice will be concluded with a brief account of the singular institutions of the "*Compagni della Calza*," or Knights of the Stocking, the festival of which was celebrated in our author's time at Venice, and is described by him. The Abbate Giustiniani erroneously ranks them among the orders of chivalry, and

tracés their origin as high as that of the *Maestri de' Cavalieri* of Venice, during the infancy of the republic. Schonebek and Mennenio are of opinion that they took their rise at the same time, and with the same views as the Cavalier della Banda of Spain, in 1368. Père Heliot is also mistaken, in referring them to a military origin; as it is clearly apparent from their rules, that the members were private gentlemen, who merely obtained the sanction of the magistrates, without any authority of the prince, or of a supreme head. Their origin is to be referred to the fifteenth century, though they chiefly flourished during the sixteenth; many of the members having had their portraits taken by the first Venetian artists of the age, the Bellini, Carpaccio, Conegliano, and even by Titian himself. They appear to have assembled merely for the purpose of public and private entertainments, as games, feasts, and theatrical representations. As the device of their association, they wore a particoloured stocking, richly embroidered and ornamented with pearls and jewels, from which the company derived its name. It was afterwards divided into different fraternities, as the *Compagnia de' Floridi*, *Sempiterni*, &c. each of which had its own laws and officers, and its peculiar habits.

CELIO MALESPINI.

PART I. NOVELLA XLI.

DRAW nearer to me, then, gentle ladies and cavaliers all, while I proceed to treat you with some account of the grand and sumptuous festivals held by the Company of the Calza, during the period of the Venetian carnival. It was about the time when our rich Sicilian friend here, whom we all of us, I believe, well know, first became desirous of residing in this our splendid city of Venice, and very happily fixed upon the above glorious and joyous season to grace his arrival, and give him a taste for his new abode. Indeed, he found he relished it so much, that he is said to have despatched half a dozen expresses for his lovely lady, one of the most beautiful women in Palermo, to join him immediately, if she wished to retain the least interest in his affections, as he should assuredly be assailed by the most potent temptations of all sorts, on all sides, which it would be next to a miracle he should resist. For the grand carnival was at hand, an epidemic of wit and pleasure

had seized upon the heads of all, and he had already elected himself chief of a new company, called The Ten, who had pledged themselves to the public to surpass all others, in every kind of innocent riot, mischief, and excess. Now, as each of the ten members had agreed to conduct a lady twice a week to their banquet, besides furnishing ten crowns towards defraying the company's supper, it inevitably followed that he must often be indebted to some fair deputy, in his own lady's absence, to grace her place. Hearing these tidings, it was not long before the beauty of Palermo made her appearance here, as a kind of guardian angel to our poor friend, and to the extreme envy or admiration of more than half the ladies in Venice. The Ten then began in good earnest to celebrate the season, assembling always at the best house, with the most splendid establishment belonging to the company, though each contributed his own portion to the entertainment, including the rarest exhibitions of every kind. Thus nobly devoting themselves to every variety of amusement, their ingenuity was kept always upon the stretch, how to vie most successfully with the rival Company of the Calza, famous for its heroic excesses and grand exhibitions of old, supported by the wealth and patronage of the chief nobility of the city, each hav-

ing taken a vow to render the scene as brilliant and happy, as games, and jousts, and balls, and banquets, music, and comedy, and every species of humour could make it. With this view a glorious theatre was seen, at the command of the Company of the Calza, to spring up, as if by enchantment, into the air, with its rich painted pillars, and cornices of white marble, its friezes of gold, and its interior, ornamented with all the most beautiful specimens of art of which the city could boast. Below these, were seen stationed still rarer forms of breathing symmetry and beauty, a hundred of our most lovely women, representing ancient statues, their folds of white drapery arranged and flowing, as if wrought out of marble by the sculptor's hand. Such a blaze of beauty bursting upon the spectator as he entered, produced the most lively impression, heightened as it was by the splendour of gems and jewellery, and the music of a thousand instruments which filled the whole air, and was heard along the waters; for, will you believe me, when I assure you that this vast theatre, with all its splendid embellishments, was not the offspring of the earth, but borne along by two immense galleys, like a creature of the ocean, over the Adriatic waves? Surrounded by a thousand light and sea-winged gondolas, I saw her bearing back her proud and glorious

way, until she had reached the bridge Rivoalto, and thence returned to St. Mark's, safely discharging her beauteous freight, while the air rang with plaudits, as the fair procession moved forwards to the great hall of council, ready prepared for their reception. For Justice herself had now assumed another face; the benches were turned into dining tables, the symbols of punishment were exchanged for the milder emblems of the queen of love and the god of wine; while the fairest and brightest faces of Venice feasted the eyes of the proudest and bravest cavaliers in the world.

Desirous of beholding so rare an exhibition as the sailing theatre afforded, the new convivial company, with our Sicilian at their head, could no longer refrain from besetting the piazza of St. Mark's, on whose steeple stood a Turkish mountebank, ready to throw himself headlong down, without hurting himself, if possible, for the amusement of his friends. In this manner, before the enchanted theatre had finished its voyage, the ladies been safely handed out again by their *cavalieri serventi*, and the Turk leaped in safety from the very top of St. Mark's, upon a rope stretched out below to receive him, to the terror of all beholders, the best part of the day was well nigh flown. Our joyous company again departed, bearing with

them the materials for their evening festival, towards the Merciarìa, and thence towards San Jacopo dall' Orio, to lay siege to the mansion of merchant Gazzuola, and destroy the fragile preparations he had been making to meet the carnival, for the last twelve months. On their way, however, just as they approached San Giuliano, they had the misfortune to encounter the procession of the old Company of the Calza, in all their pride of patrician pomp, followed by a vast retinue, bearing their gold and silver censers and covers, and at no great distance, the delicious materials of the banquet itself, according to established custom, from time immemorial. Here, then, was a delicate question to be discussed, a nice point of difference; for whether was the old or the new company of revellers to yield the way? Unluckily it was not to be adjusted by dint of discussion; and a singular contest at length commenced between the banquet-bearers on either side, a truly heroic battle of the cooks, in which some of the implements of their pleasing art became formidable weapons, dealing very unpalatable strokes, while showers of cups, and bowls, and glasses, with still more precious wares, flew winged with their own destruction on every side. Great indeed were the feats of strength and skill wrought by the followers

of either company, animated as they were by the presence of the head-cooks, and impelled to fresh efforts by their bottle-holders, the butlers, who ceased not to renew the flagging spirits of the combatants with the "red grape's juice." As long as such ammunition held out, the conflict continued to rage with equal ferocity on both sides, until the old Company being the most liberally supplied, the opposite party was at length compelled to give way. Many heroes had already measured their length upon the ground, some levelled with ladles, some stabbed with toasting forks, and others lingering under the torments of too much hot macaroni and burning soup.

But as the patrician chiefs of both companies, as well of the Company of the Calza as of the Ten, had deigned to take not the least notice of the affray, it was incumbent upon the more plebeian class to marshal themselves once more into order, and conduct the procession in the same style as before. Still, they could by no means flatter themselves with making so splendid and magnificent an exhibition as they had done: the lustre of their whole equipment, of their arms, their dresses, their plate, and of their very scutcheons, was faded, as it were, and gone. The people no longer continued to gaze upon it with the same veneration and respect; having been infinitely

better amused in witnessing the engagement, and sharing some portion of the spoils of the field. The procession, however, was still extremely grand and imposing, though shorn of some of its beams; the richness and variety of the dresses, the dazzling splendour of hose and doublet, and the embroidered stockings, the badge of the order, covered with gold and silver lace, sparkling with precious pearls and gems, diamonds, emeralds, and rubies, could surely be equalled by nothing less than a coronation day. There walked in the train of each lord four pages decked in rich particoloured vests, and mantles of silk, followed again by an infinite multitude of plate and cup bearers, with a great variety of precious vases, filled with sweets and perfumes, with the rarest fruits and birds, and the most exquisite imitations wrought in sugar, of almost every kind of object existing under the sun. Among these were to be seen a fleet of glorious galleys, sailing amidst a sea of sweets; the boldest figures in relievo mingling in mock battles; ladies, with bright faces, watching cavaliers contending in the ring; and a thousand other ingenious devices: sights which called forth the applauding shouts of the spectators.

But the procession of the companies by night, amidst a grand illumination of the whole city, was

still more striking and imposing, attended by a concert of the finest music, which, repeated from a thousand gondolas, was heard far over the bosom of the Adriatic. First came two beautiful pages, bearing two large waxen torches; next, the champion of the company of the Calza, followed by two other pages, also with torches, and men at arms, with their squires and grooms. Secondly, came the grand standard, which appeared on fire with the splendour of its ornaments, and a person with a most exquisitely wrought statue, borne in a large vase of gold and silver, richly enchased, and glowing with the brightest colours. Thirdly, appeared the golden plate-bearers, with every species of imitative confectionary, followed by a long line of attendants, the meanest of whom bore satin suits, gold bracelets, and large gold chains about their necks. Each of the members was attended, as near as I can recollect, by a train of six hundred followers, so that before the whole party had arrived, in succession, at the great council-hall, where the banquet was to be held, and where they found all the most bright and beautiful ladies of the city awaiting their arrival, whose splendid ornaments cast around them artificial day, the chief part of the night was already consumed. But why should I attempt to describe the convivial

scenes which there took place ? scenes with which too many of my hearers are familiar, to require the feeble delineation of my hand. Suffice it to observe, that ere the joyous guests had yet ceased to celebrate their convivial rites, the sun had been watching them many hours out of the east, when the music growing fainter and fainter, as the late nimble hands and feet beat time to its flagging mirth ; and the richly painted floors being strewed with the spoils of stormed castles, wounded knights, and a thousand artificial relics of a miniature world in ruins, the revel rout became desirous of adjourning the further continuation of their mysteries to another carnival, which my lovely audience must be aware will soon be here. Yet we cannot flatter ourselves that it will dispense to the happy people of Venice half the amusement which the late season, a period that well deserves to be better commemorated, afforded to us all.

PART I. NOVELLA XCVI.

AT the time when the Marquess of Pescara was governor in the Milanese, there lived two gentlemen, of the respective names of Raffaello Chiecaro and Antonio Capputo, who had obtained from the senate the use of some public stoves, which, merely paying a small annual tax, made them very large returns, consuming only half the usual proportion of fuel. Now, near the piazza of San Stefano resided a certain retainer to the court of King Philip, a man of a free and liberal turn of mind, very generally esteemed by his acquaintance. How he first became intimate with Signor Chiecaro, I am at a loss to state; but certain it is, that he was frequently seen beguiling his hours at the house of that wily Genoese. The latter, desirous one day of trying how far he could play upon the courtier's credulity, observed to him: "Dò you see this sonnet, my dear signor? if you please, I will teach you a very curious art. Read it; it is Petrarch's, and begins, you see,

‘ Rotta è l’alta colonna, e ’l verde Lauro,’ &c.

“ Now, strange as you may think it, I will shew you a different sonnet under this, beginning :

'Aimè il bel viso, aimè il soave sguardo.'

"Nay, I defy you, that is impossible," cried his friend, "or, if it be possible, pray let me learn quickly how it may be done." With an air of importance the Genoese put his hand into his pocket, and took out a small flagon, into which he dipped a bit of cotton, and touched the letters of the first sonnet, which quickly made way for those of the second. To the eyes of his companion the whole of this appeared little less than a miracle: he declared, in his excessive admiration, that it was a secret worthy the possession of the greatest princes in the world. "Yet it is yours for all that," replied the Genoese, "and when you wish to write what is not meant for every eye, you have only to dissolve so much Roman vitriol in a drop of fresh water, and take a virgin quill, never yet contaminated with ink, and write what you please. The moment it is dry, the writing will disappear; and having brought this to perfection, you will next prepare the following kind of ink: Take a handful of wheat straw, set it on fire, but look well to your house, by clapping a large extinguisher upon it before it be well burnt out. The residue will be a fine charcoal, which you will please to boil in the specified quantity of white wine, which will give you the ink required, to write upon any other subject in the same letter,

that you may think proper, the former inscription lying concealed. When you wish this last to appear, take some Istrian galls, pounded in *acquavita*, and having thus extracted their virtue, dip into it a piece of cotton, pass it lightly over the page, and the letter you want will appear." Here the Genoese ceased, and so delighted was the silly courtier with the secret, that he would willingly have bestowed upon him any reward he had asked. But the time was not yet come, and having received it gratuitously, our hero could only evince his warm gratitude for the gift. Having gone thus far, Signor Chiccaro, elated at his success, touched upon a variety of other topics; among which, after inviting his friend to take the fresh air in his garden, he put the following question: "Pray, my dear signor, have you any room in your house with a close furnace that would retain the heat?"—"Indeed I have," said the other, "and I will convince you of it directly." So introducing our Genoese into the place, who expressed himself perfectly satisfied with it, the latter again inquired, "have you such a thing as a small cauldron in the house?" "Yes, I have," was the reply. "Well, let it be broken then into pieces of about four fingers breadth, and let them be well heated over a huge charcoal fire. You will then

cool them as I shall point out to you. Take half a flask of strong vinegar, throw into it a good handful of salt, and as much pulverized tartar, and then suddenly quench the fiery metal in it by a speedy, deep, and satisfactory immersion. Repeat this five or six times over, by which the plates will be fully prepared for the ensuing process; the contrast between heat and cold being every thing upon which we have to depend. These experiments will find you sufficient employment until the morrow, when I will return, and acquaint you with the grand processes I have in view; only let the whole be conducted with the utmost secrecy, and no one touch the key of the apartment but yourself."

Flattering himself with the possession of some yet more valuable secrets, our simple hero promised to obey him in every thing; and, accordingly, the next morning exhibited the result of his labours to his view. Commending him very highly, the wily Genoese now said: "Truly, I believe, you will never be at a loss how to proceed." "I believe so too," said our conceited gentleman, to the no small amusement of the other, "for you see what I have done." "Next then," added his friend, "you must cut up the metal into small bits, weigh out of it three ounces, and melt it down in a crucible until it becomes liquid.

Into this throw, leaf by leaf, the herb which I now give you; taking about fifty plantain stalks out of his handkerchief: "Do you know what it is?" "Oh, yes, there is plenty of it growing in my meadow just by," said our hero. "You are a fortunate man, then," rejoined his friend. "You must throw it into the melted copper, and leave it to cool in the crucible, watching it frequently, till I come again." "I will take care to do so," said our hero, and proceeded forthwith to business. His next object was to gather as much of the plantain root as he could possibly find, to give the proper tinge, as he was told, to the metal, and he proceeded to weigh out, and note down the various proportions with a piece of charcoal upon the wall. Being quite ignorant, however, of the process of fusing, of the proper degree of heat, and the best mode of confining it in the crucible, he placed it on a large heap of charcoal, and set to work with a little pair of bellows, about as powerful as a lady's fan, to blow it into a flame. When he thought it began to melt, he opened the crucible, and exposing it to the air, the metal became as hard and cold as before. Repeating the same experiment until he was quite weary, and half roasted alive before the fire, to his infinite delight he saw it begin to melt, and threw in the plantain leaves as directed.

Then, no longer able to stand, and covered with dust and smoke, he lay down in a profuse perspiration, awaiting the arrival of his arch deceiver, who approved of every thing he had done, and next advised him to go and consult some chemists as to the value of his products, and learn how much they would give him the ounce. Believing he should soon penetrate into some greater secrets, faint and weary as he was, our hero hastily seized his cloak and sword, and ran as fast as his strength permitted to the shop of a certain M. Ercole, an assayer, and found him just as he was going to supper. Earnestly entreating him to put it to the test upon the spot, though the assayer begged hard for a little time, he was at length prevailed upon to try a small piece of the new metal over the fire, to which he added a few bits of lead. Soon after, he declared, on examining the crucible, that he had detected several grains of gold, and that he was prepared to offer him two crowns and a half per ounce for such a product. Being well aware he had not made use of any gold, our experimentalist upon this observed: "But you are very much deceived, friend Ercole, in supposing there is any gold in the case; I did not put a single fraction of a grain in it." "Surely," said the assayer, "you will allow me to believe my own eyes; here is the gold, and you are

one of the most fortunate men in the world, if you really did not put any gold in it." Hearing these words, the poor gentleman was overpowered with joy, and beseeching him to make a fresh trial, which succeeded equally well with the former, he assured his friend, the assayer, that he should be glad to let him have the whole of the metal on the terms he had mentioned. The assayer was extremely anxious to learn the exact process he had observed in fusing it, which our hero, however, with an air of infinite importance, tried to evade, and at length flatly refused to make him acquainted with the secret. Then, promising to bring fresh samples very soon, he retired and went to rest, though quite unable to close his eyes on account of the multitude of castles in the air, that ceased not to haunt his imagination. His next meeting with his friend the Genoese was a very joyous one. He informed him, with tears of gratitude, of the grand test, and the complete success of his experiments. "Then I am now satisfied," returned the Genoese, "for I perceive you are quite equal to conduct the whole process without my farther assistance. Indeed, your facility and skill are truly astonishing; and if you still indulge the least doubt of your own ability, pray mention it!" "Nay," replied his friend, "I have none; I think I stand in need of no

farther directions : and I have only to express my gratitude for the ample instructions you have already given me. Only acquaint me in what manner I can at all requite you, for I assure you, I shall think nothing too great for the noble secrets you have confided in me." " Say no more," said the Genoese, " I have only to entreat that you will value the secret for my sake, and unfold it to no one."

Unable to make any adequate return to this kind and courteous language, our hero could only press his friend's hand in silence, who, embracing him tenderly, took his departure. Thus fancying himself in full possession of unlimited wealth, he began to calculate the different sums which he intended to bestow upon his friends and relatives, saying to himself as he proceeded, " Yes, I will purchase the castle for Pietro ; my good Paolo shall have an estate now, but Giovanni must have the marquisate. Thanks, great thanks to the Almighty, I shall at length have a little money in my pocket, in addition to his majesty's pension, which I can throw about on all sides as I please. My sole fear is, that the money-market will not be able to supply me fast enough for my precious metal, though I dispose of it in all parts of the world." Then after revolving the subject deeply in his mind, he resolved to form a complete establish-

ment, for the manufacture of the precious article, hiring a number of artificers to assist him in the business, and to collect a quantity of plantain roots, wherever they were known to grow. These he stored up by fifty and a hundred loads at a time, until he had completely ransacked the country for many miles round. He employed all the boys and women he could find, whom he supplied with baskets to bring the plantains to his house in such quantities as to excite the curiosity and wonder of all the neighbourhood.

Inquisitive to learn the nature of such proceedings, his wife frequently applied to him for an explanation, but always in vain, being told to attend to her household affairs, as he was fully competent to manage his own. When he had made his final preparations, his friend the Genoese one day came to him, with a countenance full of anxiety, and accosted him thus: "I wish, from my very soul, I had never undertaken this speculation from the senate, with all its pretended privileges: a curse upon all such furnaces, I am heartily sick of the job."—"My dear Raffaella," cried our hero, "what is it that has thus disturbed you?" "What is it?" replied the wily Genoese; "why, it is this: I wish to go and leave this business with which our senate has saddled me, (and yet I am compelled to keep to

my engagement,) and to set out immediately for Genoa. Now I am come to beg you will please to lend me an hundred ducats until my return, which I shall take as a particular favour." "Oh, certainly," said our hero, and immediately went out, and returned with a bag of gold, saying, "help yourself, my dear friend, and take as many as you please; for I owe you more, far more than any thing I can repay. Indeed, I wish you would deign to put my gratitude to a severer test; I have friends who will join me in assisting you to a much larger amount." "I thank you," said the Genoese, "I will only take this sum at present; it is quite sufficient for the object I have in view." Then quietly pocketing the money, he took his departure, leaving our poor hero to carry on his operations alone. He had already expended more than a thousand crowns in the purchase of some buildings from Angelo Coiro, near Monte Brianza, admirably situated, as he imagined, for the purpose of carrying on his extensive business. Hither were conveyed the materials of his new trade, loads of charcoal and plantain, with crucibles, brass cauldrons, and silver plate; believing he was the first man who could boast of having set up a grand manufactory of gold. And here, shutting himself up, he superintended his enormous furnace, stripping himself to the skin,

in order the better to heat his crucibles, and blowing with all his might to produce the fusion of his metals. Great was the fire, and great his toil and torture, though not equal to his desire of beholding the gold. Three hours incessantly he blew and blew, trying different kinds of processes, and different sized vessels, without the least effect. The strong heat and the working of the bellows together, began at length to prove quite too much for his strength, while he stood in a violent perspiration from head to foot, without being any nearer the accomplishment of his task. The rest of his fires were in the same predicament, not the least fusion of the metals appearing, and the whole of his establishment, servants and assistants, were as weary and exhausted as himself. Eight hours had now elapsed, when the place becoming heated like one immense stove, and our poor hero having twice fainted away, he was borne home by his people, who refused any longer to bear the brunt of the day. His wife, who had observed a remarkable change in him of late, an unaccountable elevation and inequality of spirits, wild at times, and at times depressed, conceived no time was to be lost. Seeing him then brought home in the condition we have described, his face fiery, and his clothes covered with foam and dust, crying out at the same time loudly for drink, she compas-

sionately ran towards him, and accosted him thus : "What can be the reason, my dear, of your strange conduct, shutting yourself up day and night, in a place too hot for a salamander? Would to heaven that that old wretch of a Genoese had broken his neck before you saw him! would that the great demon had caught him in his clutches! would that you had not been such a fool, my dear, as to have listened to him!" Hearing himself thus tenderly apostrophized by his wife, who presumed to intermeddle in things that he thought did not concern her, the poor man, impelled by rage and disappointment, lent her two hearty cuffs on the side of her head, which somewhat checked the flow of her tenderness. Then out of mere spite, instead of going to repose as he ought to have done, he got up, and ran to his friend the assayer's, to put his folly to a further test, with the same unhappy result as before. His final hopes now rested upon the return of the arch villain Chiecaro to put him into the right way again; but after bearing the sickness of hope deferred with great fortitude, during many weeks, he bethought him of following the Genoese, though he had no directions how to find him. First, however, he essayed the effect of sending letters and special messengers in all directions, without hearing the least tidings of him. His own per-

sonal exertions proved equally fruitless; and in this state of affairs, lost in a world of chimeras, he passed his unhappy time till Christmas. About that time happening one day to be in company, he heard a party of gentlemen conversing, one of whom observed, "If you can do this, you will render me a great service; for a certain speculation, by which I hoped to become richer than the Grand Turk, has ended in smoke. An old villain of a Genoese, whom God confound, has emptied my pockets of all my ready cash, though he seemed to come, like Jupiter, in a golden shower."—"And how," replied his friend, "did he inveigle you? What was the trick?"—"What was the trick, indeed? you shall hear! He wanted to teach me how to make gold, and I, like a simple one who loves simplicity, wished to learn. For this purpose I advanced three hundred gold crowns, deposited in the hands of Luca Contile."—"Did you speak of gold crowns?" cried our hero, no longer able to repress his curiosity, "and of a Genoese? for pity's sake, dear captain, go on." This the captain did, and mutual explanations and condolences then took place. The only fact which they could clearly ascertain, was, that he had succeeded in the same manner in cheating them all; that he was gone, and no longer to be found. After conversing for some

time together upon the subject, and considering in what way the losses they had suffered might best be repaired, they arrived at the conclusion, that the most effectual plan would be, to avail themselves of the same means as had been practised by the Genoese, whenever they had the good fortune to meet with any friend as simple as they had themselves been. Somewhat consoled with having hit upon this ingenious method of reimbursing themselves, they laughed heartily, and took leave.

PART II. NOV. XI.

Upon the eve of the regal and splendid nuptials about to be solemnized between the Duke Guglielmo and the Princess Eleonora of Austria, the Marquess Pescara, then governor over the Milanese, despatched the Cavalier Lione Aretino, a celebrated sculptor, to direct the preparations, in honour of the occasion, at Mantua. After a number of ingenious plans had been proposed and rejected, it was finally agreed among persons of the finest taste and ability, to select that of the "Arch of Loyal Lovers," so well described by Amadis of Gaul, to be represented with the richest embellishments. With this view an admirable site was first pitched upon; one of the most beautiful, perhaps, ever chosen for the celebration of so joyous a festival. Several hundreds of people were immediately engaged, besides twenty directors, brought by Aretino from Milan, well versed in similar matters, and wholly devoted to the work. In vain should we attempt to describe the vast preparations, the grand statues, the beautiful pictures, the splendid illuminations hung in the air, and all the other miraculous exhibitions calculated to surprise the spec-

tator. Enough to state, they were declared by all to be equal to any thing before exhibited by the greatest monarch upon earth. Both Tuscan and Latin verses were written for the occasion by that divine wit Luca Contile; who did not disdain, also, to afford his assistance to the supreme artist, Aretino, wherever it might be most wanted. Yet both being of themselves unequal to achieve the grand objects they had in view, they wrote to the Marquess at Milan, entreating him to send them one of the Malespini, their intimate friend, and a faithful servant of King Philip. The marquess, ever intent upon the duke's interests, readily complied with their request, declaring that they could not have hit upon a more skilful hand, he having had a vast experience in the celebration of festivals of every kind in Milan. Despatching Malespini, therefore, post to Mantua, he was met by a deputation of merry gentlemen, who conducted him to the scene of action with loud applause. After their witty compliments were over, he directly set his head to work, as it was his duty, to devise how he might best add to the splendour and attraction of the scenery, and so highly did the others approve of his opinions, that they resolved to commit the sole charge of the infernal regions, one of the very highest trust, to his hands. It was indeed of a most de-

licate nature, the whole of the fireworks being confined to this spot ; so that he looked somewhat rueful in entering upon his new province, though he heartily devoted himself to the task for the poor cavalier's sake, overburdened as he was with the infinite variety of his duties. Every thing was now conducted with the greatest diligence and despatch, Malespini awakening a spirit of emulation among his devils, which communicated itself to the other artists. Even the duke himself occasionally inspected the works, though it was a general rule, in order not to impede their progress, to admit no company except such as he introduced ; for two of the gentlemen were always obliged to attend the duke, for the purpose of explaining every thing ; and so very irksome had this practice become, that the cavalier Aretino threw the whole burthen of it upon poor Malespini's shoulders. He had soon the wit, however, to take refuge in the lowest depths of his own infernal domain, rather than expose himself to the eternal questions of the foolish courtiers, and there he always lay hid, until the lords and ladies were gone.

The governor having already arrived at Mantua, and taken possession of the king's palace, likewise visited the works, anxious to bring them to a speedy termination, as the royal visitors had nearly all ar-

rived. But observing that there was a deficiency of glass in giving a fine reflection to the whole, Malespini was commissioned to go to Milan with large orders, which ought to have been already executed, and not to return without fulfilling them. These he despatched with such celerity, returning two days before the festival, that he won the applause of all the lords and princes present; not having broken a single chandelier by the way. Malespini, returning to his infernal labours, inspired such a degree of activity into his laziest imps, as to extort the applause of all. Yet some there were, mightily afraid of burning their fingers with the work, whenever his back, or that of the cavalier, was turned upon them. These he instigated by blows, and moreover importuned the duke to let the same plan be adopted in his regions above, as in those underneath. This likewise greatly expedited the business towards the last; for Aretino had just before been seized with such a fit of desperation, that he threatened to assassinate two of the idlest, and throw up the whole concern, as a hopeless job. So they got an order from the duke, for the artificers to work all night long, encouraging and scourging them by turns the whole of the time. By these means the magnificent pile seemed to start into sudden existence, and was

considered a miracle by the people. For the cavalier had now succeeded in drawing off the water from the lake, into a sort of canal, before the enchanted island, so that no one could approach it but by the bridge, where the cavaliers were to arrive, after having engaged in battle, and come off victors, against the garrison. The cavaliers, namely, the Marquis Pescara, Don Giovanni d'Avalos his brother, and Don Giorgio Mariquez, were to be led on by two Amazons towards the canal, over which a small wooden bridge projected, by which they were to pass, when it became immediately submerged as before. Then they arrived under the Arch of the Loyal Lovers, over which a statue of bronze appeared, with a trumpet in her hand, to welcome the approach of the conqueror, while a shower of flowers fell upon his head; until just as he passed under a great vault, he was suddenly assaulted by a number of naked weapons, and a huge hand was stretched forth, which dragged him into the enchanted cave of Apollidone and Grimanessa, where he remained a prisoner. The cavalier being thus worsted, was next to be conducted by the two Amazons to the place where the bridge had disappeared; and the statue was seen venting fire and flame out of the trumpet. He was then to be seized by a host of devils, and thrown into the Inferno. It

required a considerable effort of skill to compel the bridge to stay under water, which was at length, however, devised by the cavalier, applying some ropes and iron bands in such a way as to make it rise and fall at pleasure. Requiring, after this feat, some little repose, he begged Malespini to direct the remainder of the work, and to take particular care that no one meddled with the bridge; which might destroy the machinery and break it into a thousand pieces. Having taken upon himself the duty of a sentinel, Malespini desired him to make his mind easy, and get a little rest, for the whole was in safe hands. Then brandishing a huge stick, he went among the artificers, crying as he smote the more idle among them: "Courage, courage, my dear brothers; let us employ the little time that remains to some purpose!" Being thus engaged, about two hours before midnight torch-lights were observed flashing in the theatre, followed by a large train of lords and princes. Malespini being aware of them at a distance, in order to avoid the reiterated persecutions to which he had formerly been subjected, ran and hid himself within his inferno, in hopes they might the sooner take their leave. The company then burst in upon him, consisting of the Cardinal Madruccio, followed by various prelates, the dukes of Parma and of Mantua, the

Marquess Pescara, with numerous counts and cavaliers. After inspecting the whole place, they proceeded to the intended field of battle, wide and capacious, and extremely well laid out. Here the duke Guglielmo with a few of his friends, stopping till the rest of the party had passed on, was desirous of showing them the secret bridge. For this purpose he took hold of one of the ropes by which it was bound, and giving it a pretty smart jerk, and it happening to be the wrong one, the whole machinery broke with a tremendous crash, and the bridge rose up, dashing the water abroad on all sides. Malespini hearing the terrific sound, hastily ran towards the spot, and beholding the bridge out of the water, and the machinery that had employed so many painful hours broken into pieces, which his friend too had just committed to his care, felt such a sudden emotion of anger, that seeing the duke, a little hunchbacked man, with whose person he was unacquainted, standing near, and taking him for the prelate's clerk not far from him, he lent him several pretty severe blows upon the shoulders, with the weapon he held in his hand: "Villain of a hunchback!" he cried, "I feel the greatest inclination to knock your brains out;" which he might, perhaps, have done, but for the speedy interference of those around him. The duke,

conscious of the mischief he had committed, and seeing him in such a furious passion, replied not a word; while Malespini, raving and swearing, declared he had not done with him yet, and hastened as fast as possible to accuse the little hunchback before the marquess. "There he is," he cried, as the duke with his few companions appeared. "See, my lord, what sort of people you permit to visit our works! Oh, my lord, he has broken the beautiful bridge, the Bridge of the Loyal Lovers, which was to grace the noble duke's espousals! It is entirely broken!" In the mean while, all the people present, on the appearance of the duke, made their obeisance; when poor Malespini, beginning to suspect that all was not right, intently eyed the little hunchback, whose head he had broken. But when the truth burst upon him, he grew pale and mute, while the blood seemed to stagnate in his veins: for he still held the fatal cudgel in his hands, as he beheld the marquess and other princes paying homage to the duke. Though still smarting a little, the duke could not help laughing at the pitiable appearance of his accuser; and addressing himself to the noblemen, he said: "I think I ought to be the accuser here: that gentleman has to answer for an assault; and truly, my lords, I was afraid he was going to slay me alive; it is won-

derful how I escaped out of his hands." Then turning towards the trembling Malespini, he continued: "Come, friend, I believe we must both give and take; I have done you a terrible injury, and you have had your revenge." "Oh! my lord duke," stammered out the unhappy gentleman; "Oh! my lord, may I presume your excellency will ever forgive me? Your excellency must be informed that I had never the honour of being acquainted with your person, or this dreadful affair could not have happened: attribute it then only to my regard for your excellency's interests." "I do," replied the duke, "for you have given me a very sensible proof of it, and I feel it, as I believe I ought to do, for meddling where I had no business:" and upon this, he shrugged his shoulders, and shook hands with Malespini, while the whole palace rang with mingled laughter and applause. Still Malespini was ill at ease; for he had now to encounter the reproaches of Aretino, who seemed, however, somewhat consoled at the revenge he had taken, which he thought was not at all too much; though they both wore a very lugubrious face upon the occasion. Their next business was, if possible, to repair the damage; which, though great, turned out not to be irreparable. For Malespini, having now dealt with his devils, gave his assistance to the unhappy Are-

tino, until the entire work was restored; and the day of the festival arrived.

The valiant cavaliers now engaged on both sides with the utmost valour, fighting during the greater part of the night by torch-light, and displaying all the terrors of a mock heroic battle and storm by night. The Marquess Pescara had already stretched three heroes on the ground, while a fourth, an unfortunate gentleman of Ferrara, was seized and dragged by the devils into Malespini's hell; where he was put to all kinds of tortures, till the place resounded with his cries. Another was thrown headlong down a tremendous precipice, to the terror of all the spectators, who imagined he must have infallibly broken his neck; but Pluto had the kindness to receive him upon a bed of feathers, instead of flames. In the Inferno were exhibited all those extraordinary embellishments with which it is peopled by the poets; — Ixion's wheel, the stone of Sisyphus, Tantalus with his apples, the vulture of the fire-stealer, Cerberus with his three heads, and a variety of other terrific objects. Old Charon was extremely busy with his souls, arrayed in every kind of form and dress, with fires and furies in abundance, to greet their arrival. One of the principal figures was that of Lodovico Gonzaga, brother to the duke, representing a Cava-

ber of the Sun, arrayed in white velvet, trimmed with rays of fire; and wearing a band of crimson silk, lined with gold, saturated with inflammable liquids. Issuing in this dress out of a cave, he set fire to the belt, and instantly appeared enveloped in flames; for him alone being reserved the glory of giving freedom to the captives, enchanted in the den of Apollidone and Grimanessa, an exploit that crowned the wonders of the scene. But a still more strange and serious accident occurred to Malespini than to any of the enchanted persons present. For he had ordered a choice selection of wines to be in readiness, to refresh the actors and their assistants. Now some of these were inadvertently placed among some bottles of very fine aqua vitæ, mixed with camphor and other ingredients, calculated to make a fine display of fireworks, which the devils were to spout out of their mouths and their eyes, without injuring any one. It happened that Charon, in his frequent voyages, was entrusted with a quantity of rich dresses and ornaments, esteemed of much more value than the souls whom they adorned, for the better protection of which some of the duke's guards had been appointed. Observing the number of flasks, and supposing them filled with good wine, as, in truth, many of them were, they took an opportunity, as soon as possible, of

emptying them of their contents. Just then poor Malespini came wandering by, with scorched eyebrows, inflamed cheeks, and with little of his mustachios remaining, faint and weary "with excess of toil," and dying of thirst. Imagining that his part was nearly played, and the festival almost over, he seized upon one of these fatal flasks, and without farther consideration, swallowed a great part of it at a single draught. But finding it to be pure aqua vitae, he stopped about half way; for he had yet the task of arraying a huge porter in a demon's habiliments, who was to bear in his hand a large machine, made of fine linen, steeped in spirits, which he was afterwards to set on fire, and it therefore behoved him to husband his strength. In this blaze the demon was to run round the top of a large tower in the city of Pluto, and to precipitate himself thence into the depths of the Inferno; but, seized with a sudden qualm on beholding the place, and hearing the noise and confusion of demons below, which he imagined too nearly resembled the reality, no persuasions or threats could prevail upon him to venture upon the perilous leap. Malespini, determined not to bate a jot of what appertained to his duty on the occasion, when he found that neither force nor entreaties availed, gave him a sound cuff on the side of the

head, and resolving not to disappoint the spectators, seized upon his devil's dress, arrayed himself in it; took the blazing machine, and ran with the utmost speed round the great tower; thence, throwing his blazing emblems before him, with the spirit of a real demon, he took a flying leap in pursuit of them; thanks to the quantity of brandy he had swallowed, which considerably diminished the height of the tower. Almost every one who beheld him, and even Aretino himself, astonished at the sight, and believing it to be the porter, pronounced him a dead man; but thanks again, perhaps, to the brandy, our hero sustained no kind of harm. Yet this formed only a part of the grand exhibitions of the evening, the whole of which it would be an idle attempt to describe. The battle of the cavaliers, the enchanted bridge, and the disenchantment of the lovers, would each require a separate story, while the jousts and games that followed, attended by the flower of beauty and the pride of chivalry of all Italy, gave a joyous termination to those happy nuptials, from which no one returned home without some proofs of the munificence of the duke.

PART II. NOVELLA LXI.

MANY years ago, there dwelt in the city of Ainalto, a certain merchant, who, among his other speculations, was unlucky enough to venture in the matrimonial lottery, and to draw a very bold and artful woman for his wife. Now his business frequently leading him to a distance from home, the lady was at full liberty to indulge "her love of pleasure and her love of sway," neglecting no opportunity of domineering over her household, and coquetting with the prettiest young fellows she could find. One of these at length became so particular a favourite, as to excite the notice of one of the merchant's neighbours, who often amused himself with counting the number of visits paid to her by her gentle cavalier, during the husband's absence. He next resolved to add to his amusement by acquainting the poor gentleman with his suspicions, who, expressing all the surprise and concern possible upon the occasion, thanked his friend for his advice, observing that he would take care to provide a remedy. And in order to convince himself the more effectually of what he did not in the least wish to know, he fixed to return suddenly to his own house

the very first night he should be supposed to be at a distance. So, to be as good as his word, he feigned a pretty long journey, but retracing his steps towards evening, he went straight to his friend's house, situated just opposite his own, whence he could easily descry the motions of his enemy, if such indeed were lurking about his premises that night. His friend, who had stationed himself at his side, when he was just on the point of dropping to sleep, about midnight, was suddenly roused by an exclamation of horror from the poor merchant, and looking out of the window, beheld the lover standing at his usual station. The door not being immediately opened, the latter took a few turns before the house with an easy and confident air, by no means an auspicious sign in the eyes of our jealous spectator, who pronounced himself to be a very unhappy man. With his friend's advice, therefore, he resolved to employ the following stratagem. After disguising himself as well as he could, he very quietly stepped down stairs, and joining the gentleman upon the terrace, he accosted him in a low tone as follows: "My mistress, signor, knows very well who it is, and has sent me to say, that, fearing her husband's return, she wishes me to introduce you some other way into the house, lest any one should observe you walking before the door."

Signor Drudo, believing him of course one of the lady's domestics, consented to accompany him, and upon approaching another entrance, the husband took a key from his pocket, and led the unconscious lover up a back staircase, into a room where lay a huge chest. "My mistress begs me to conceal you a few moments in this trunk, signor, until my foolish master goes; when you may depend that she will not delay a moment in coming for you herself, and will give you the best entertainment that the house can afford. So jump in, signor; plenty of room and plenty of air; and you will not have to wait many minutes." Accordingly, with a becoming deference for the lady's orders, the bold youth stepped in, and the husband locking him fast, put the key into his pocket, and hastened back again to the house of his friend. "He is caught," he cried; "the rat is fast in the trap, what will be the best way, think you, of disposing of him?" This soon became a very general question, all his friends and relations being summoned to decide upon it, especially the female portion, who were quite delighted to hear the tidings, having long owed the merchant's wife a grudge, for the haughtiness and intolerance of her manners. To add to the publicity of the affair, the lady's parents were roused from their beds in the middle of

the night, and requested to attend ; and even her brothers and sisters, and cousins from the country, were not spared upon the occasion : all being assembled in council, to strike the souls of the guilty pair with tenfold awe, confusion, and despair. With this charitable view, the whole procession directed their steps towards the house of their victims, while in the mean time the unhappy lover had been rather anxiously awaiting the arrival of his beloved, who on her part was looking as anxiously out of the windows, wondering what could possibly delay him so long, as he was accustomed to anticipate the hour. Hearing footsteps passing in all directions, but none approaching near, the poor lover, already half stifled, began to kick and cry out with all his strength, in which he was successful enough to attract the lady's ear in the next apartment, who inquired in a great fright what it was. " It is I, my dear soul," returned a feeble voice, " I am just dead ; I wonder you can be so cruel as to keep me here." " Why, how did you get there, in the name of all the saints ? it is none of my doing, I am sure." " I do not know," said the voice, " but your servant put me here by your orders, lest your husband should see me." " Oh, Lord ! help me, then," she cried, " I see how it all is ; it is my husband's doing. It is all

discovered. What, in the name of heaven, shall we do?" "Let me out, by all means," cried the voice; "unless you wish to see me perish." "Oh! dear, but my husband has got the key, and it is impossible to break it open; besides, he would murder me if I did." "Look for another key, then," said the voice. "That is a good thought; so I will," said the lady; and directing her search very effectually, she hit upon the right key, and was happy enough to liberate her lover.

Once free, after drawing many deep sighs, not for love, but to recover his breathing, he was about to take his leave of the lady, and secure his escape while there was yet time, when seizing him half frantic in her arms, she conjured him not to abandon her alone to death and to dishonour. "But what can be done?" cried he, "how can you contrive to escape?"—"Why," said she, "if we could put somebody else into the trunk, there might be some excuse for letting you out."—"True," said her lover, "but who can we find to take my place, so that I may go, for it is quite time?"—"Now I think of it," returned the lady, "there is a young ass in the stable; if you would assist me to get it here, and shut it up in the box."—"Certainly I will do that," replied the lover, though not much flattered at the idea of his succes-

sor, "I will do that; and let us go about it quickly." So having achieved this feat, and kissed his fair deliverer tenderly, he ran out of the house; while the lady, having locked up the little donkey, very quietly went to rest. Ere long, however, she was roused by a tremendous noise at the door; all the relations she had in the world were arrived, and she went down stairs to welcome them herself. "Now," cried the enraged husband, rushing in, followed by the whole troop, "I will convince you of the truth of all I have said; go in, go in, and you shall take this vile daughter of yours home with you, after we have despatched her wretched paramour before her face." This they one and all promised him to do, proceeding with lighted torches and drawn swords to the scene of action, and followed at a convenient distance by the women, extremely curious to behold the termination of the tragedy. The lady, expressing the utmost astonishment at these proceedings, and the strange reception she met with on all hands, her husband, without deigning to reply, lent her a pretty severe box on the ear, a species of compliment which was as eagerly returned. "Mind whom you have to deal with, and what you say," exclaimed the insulted fair one; "do you think I will be thus treated in the presence of my parents?"—"Oh, thou vile, abandoned

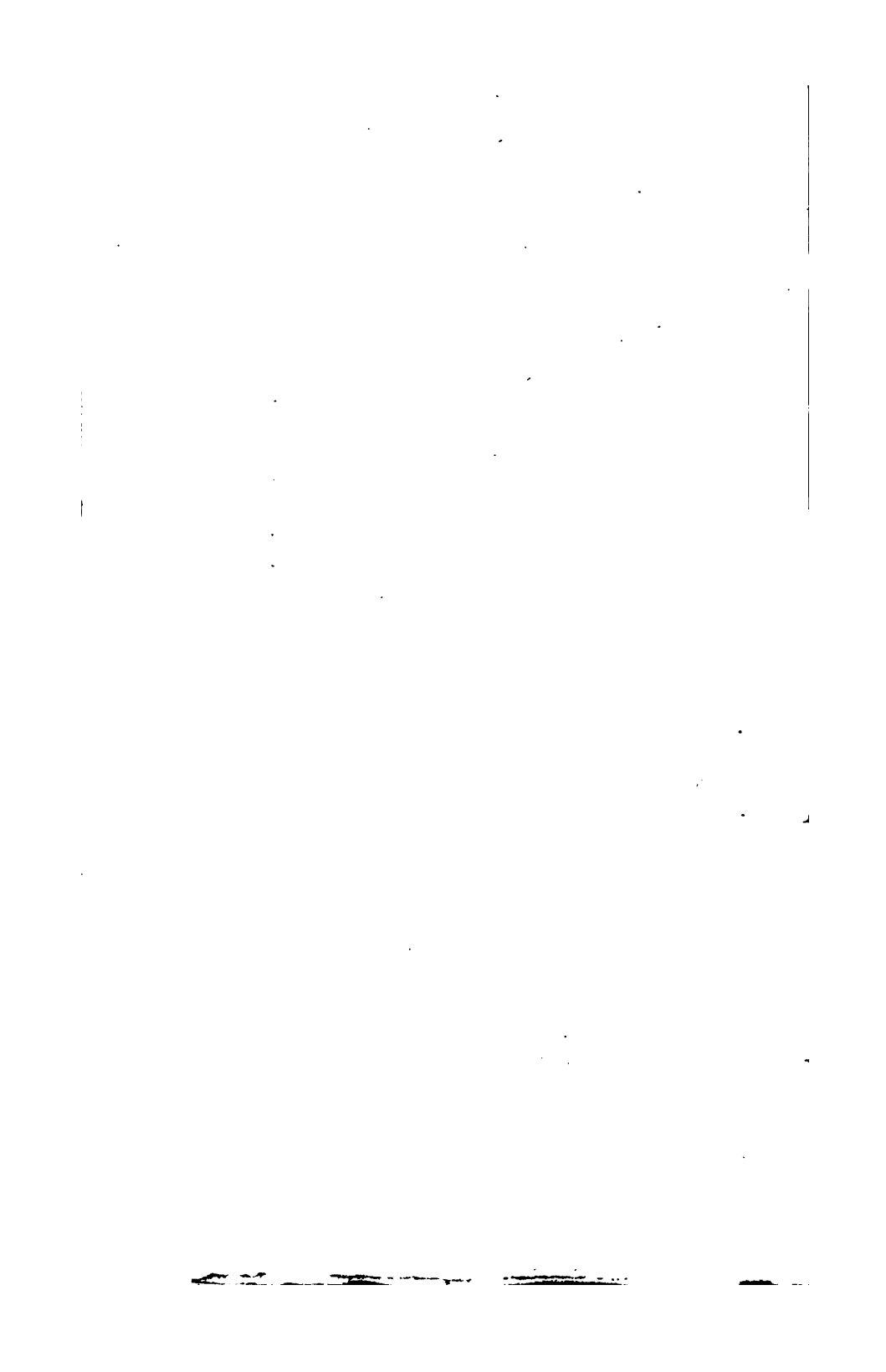
woman!" he returned, "what will you say when I shew them your wicked paramour, whom we are going to kill before your face; and upon this a volley of abuse was launched on her from all sides; not a single one of her friends or relatives joining their voice to hers. "Yes; go on, go on," she cried, "call me by all the horrid names you please; for I have the satisfaction of knowing that you all lie in your throats; yes, you do, you do: or else you are all stark mad: my husband must have driven you out of your wits."—"Let us inquire of this chest," retorted he; "let us hear what that will say."—"Oh, villain!" cried his wife, "you know I never had the key in my life, and whoever you may have hidden there, I swear I have never had any thing to say to him in all my life, and I trust that heaven will help me, and make my innocence manifest to the world. Yes, and heaven will interfere, for it is all a vile conspiracy to rob a poor inoffensive and injured woman of her chief crown and jewel, her innocence and honour!"

"Come, no whining," cried her husband, "I have long known your practices; but I hardly thought that he could have made such a complete hypocrite of you: he seems to have taught you to some purpose indeed! Your time is at length come. I will give such proofs of your depravity! Come along,

I am going to open the box. But first, my good friends, have your weapons ready, and draw closer round. Strike sure, and take good care he does not escape; for I can assure you he is a fierce and powerful fellow."—"Never fear," they all cried at once; "we will do his business; I think we are a match for him;" and wrapping their mantles around them, and brandishing their swords, they entered him to proceed. One of them even cried, in an insulting tone; "Have you confessed yourself, villain? for you are likely to have no other priests to officiate than ourselves." As the jealous husband was unlocking the trunk, his mother and sisters turned their heads aside, as if desirous of shunning the horrid sight, even the shedding of a wicked adulterer's blood.

With hands and eyes intent upon the approaching slaughter, the men of vengeance stood; the box opened, and the ass, uneasy at having been so long confined, got upon his legs, and the better to take his breath, brayed a long and discordant welcome to his friends. Such was the sudden shock he gave them, that some of the spectators fainted; the more fortunate ran away, and great was the terror and confusion before order could be restored. The more devout cried out that it was a miracle sent to prove the innocence of the lady, and the wicked design of

injuring her reputation ; so that with one accord changing the object of their resentment, they began to revile the poor merchant, and accuse him of the most flagitious conduct in attempting to ruin the reputation of his own wife : indeed, had he not quickly sought refuge elsewhere, the lady's brothers would have consigned him to the fate they had prepared for her lover. It was some time before he was again received into favour by the lady and her friends, nor was he ever afterwards known to make the least complaint, although the visits of the lover were so often renewed as to attract the notice of every body but himself.



Salbuccio Salbucci.

SALVUCCIO SALVUCCI.

Few particulars are to be met with relating to the life and productions of the above author, one of Italy's most rare and scanty novelists. There exist only two of his stories, which are known to have been published; though we are informed, that like many other of his contemporaries, he designed to present us with a greater number; the want of which, without some additional claims to superiority in point of quality, is not much to be regretted. Yet, though much inferior to some of his predecessors, he was sufficiently famous, about the period in which he wrote, to occupy a rank in the list of Italian writers of prose fiction. The earlier copies of his work have long since become extremely rare; though a very exact one is said to have formerly belonged to the Borromeo collection, taken from that of the original edition, published at Florence in 1591, which was recently preserved in the Vatican library at Rome. It likewise formed a portion of the collection of the late Alessandro Gregorio Capponi, in whose catalogue it may be found enumerated.

SALVUCCIO SALVUCCI.

ABOUT the year 1572, during the government of the viceroy of Naples, whose magnificence, whose clemency, and love of justice won the regard of all classes, there was a solemn-festival held during carnival, given by his highness in honour of the numerous dukes and princes who then resorted to the city. Towards the conclusion of the banquet, the prince of Bisignan, whose agreeable and somewhat flattering manners placed him on very familiar terms with the viceroy, taking occasion to applaud his equal sway and his successful prosecution of delinquents, inquired whether he had then in custody any of a very notorious character who were shortly about to expiate their offences with their blood. The viceroy replied in the affirmative, observing, there were four of this description, who, the governor had just informed him, were kept in the strictest confinement, daily awaiting the signal of their doom. "Have you any objection," returned the prince, "to state the respective reasons of their imprisonment?" "None

in the world," was the reply; "the first is a doctor of laws, who by the falsification of certain deeds contrived to deprive another of his life and property; the second, a doctor of physic, who was bribed at a high rate to despatch one of his patients somewhat too speedily to the other world; the third, while commanding the fortress of Castello dell' Uovo, took the liberty of defrauding the soldiers of their pay, and was in actual treaty, gentlemen, to deliver up the place to the Turks. The last of this precious set, being entrusted with a large sum of money by various people, secured it for his own purposes, and became bankrupt, setting out from Naples for Constantinople, the grand receptacle for wretches of this description; but he had not the good fortune to get clear even of our coasts." "All these are indeed flagrant instances," observed the prince, "and deserving of the very severest visitation of the laws. For they may be considered as four of the leading professions in the world, those of the lawyer, the physician, the governor, and the merchant, established, as it were, for the benefit of the community, whereas these villains have converted the sources of existence into poison, and thus become guilty of the most atrocious and least excusable of crimes."

"It is true," replied the viceroy, "and since we

are assembled here for the purpose of amusing ourselves, let us in turn consider which of these professions ought to be esteemed the most effectual in the promotion of property, of honour, and of life. And we would first have the opinion of the Duke of Città Penna; then that of Atri; thirdly, of Amalfi; and last, but not least of all, that of our friend Somma. As supreme umpire in this matter, let us elect our prince Bisignan; he shall decide which of us judges best as to the utility of their respective callings. And in regard to the mischief they produce in the world, and their respective pre-eminence in evil, I should like the good prince of Salerno to put us right. And understand, friends, there must be no appeal from, and no sort of contradiction to this supreme jurisdiction of mine."—"It is well," exclaimed the Duke of Città Penna, "and as your highness has first requested my humble opinion on this high and important subject, I shall express myself frankly, without wishing to be understood to make particular allusion to any member of these said professions, and gladly referring the errors I may fall into, to the wisdom of such of you as will rectify them." "That is well said," interrupted the viceroy, "the question is quite general; we have nothing to do with individuals; they need not be afraid of us, so proceed cheerily with the

question!"—"I say, then," pursued the duke, "that keeping the '*lucidus ordo*' of our argument in view, I mean first to put our lawyer to the bar, as he first made his appearance on the tapis. The rest of you may deal with his successors as you please; but I am determined to have a fling at him. For he is, to say the least of him, a two-edged sword, which can cut very sharply both ways, so much so, that not all the governors, merchants, or physicians in the world are to be in any way compared to him. Behold him pouring forth a tide of learned eloquence in defence of the life, the property, and the honour of some rogue, whom he brings off victorious. What is so rascally? Had it not been for him, the villain would have got his deserts. And let me add, that if the learned gentleman at once applies his ignorance, of which the world, and especially the world of lawyers, is very full, and his knowledge united, in doing mischief, how great is that mischief, no less to his client than to others, whose very lives it may concern, and whose property or honour are most frequently at stake: while the guilty themselves are often falsely convicted, either through their counsel's ignorance, or their wilful consent, insomuch that knowledge itself, in the hands of such wretches as these, may be com-

pared to a knife in the hands of a madman. In fact, they will often restore the stolen bacon, as it is said, into the kitchen of the thief, if he possess the dexterity to treat them to a slice, while the poor owner walks empty handed away."

The Duke of Città Penna here checking himself, he of Atri next took up the theme, proposing to deal as unceremoniously with the doctor of physic as his precursor had done with the man of law. "It is fit," he continued, "that we deal pretty roundly with a man who mostly prescribes doses of three several qualities to a poor sick wretch at a venture, trusting that so many opposite poisons may probably cancel each other, without destroying the patient along with them. It is at best a perilous business, in which so many materials, and so many false assurances to help them down, are to be swallowed. And for this reason physicians are in many places not to be met with; none, for instance, being found in the Isle of Giappone; and they were banished, in its ancient and best days, from the city of Rome. 'Physician, cure thyself,' is in every body's mouth, while they are well and in possession of their judgment; but as the latter declines with their health, they then send for him. 'Do you not perceive, O citizens,' cried a

wise Roman, 'that it is for conferring upon us the benefit of death, that they require payment!' 'Our physician, moreover, mostly gives proof of skill in redeeming some vile felon from the jaws of Cerberus; saving, probably, his life and property, both forfeited to the laws; and by this process, against his own confession, he strives to justify his errors, by declaring such a wretch worthy of absolution. But though his prescriptions often agree excellently well with rogues, they have quite a different effect upon honest men; and as many of us as henceforward allow ourselves to be carried off, either by ignorance or stratagem; why, I say, it is our own fault."

As he thus concluded, the Duke of Amalfi next prepared, with a cheerful countenance, to handle the merits of the commander, who, he observed, "has very serious charge confided to him. In the field, or in the garrison, the lives of thousands are entrusted to his hands: their wealth, their honour, their all, depend upon the skill and probity with which he executes his task. But when he once begins to peculate, to declare a truce with his fidelity and honour, and to treat or to fight on his own bottom; as an author somewhere observes, he is very far from being an honest man. Neither friend nor foe can hold his

promise good, though he often swears on the faith of a loyal soldier; and this must be sufficient, without other instances, to signify my opinion, whether you judge it right or wrong."

The Duke of Somma, being the fourth, had now to round off the period of their discourse, which he accomplished in a very polished and complete style. He declared "that the good and trust-worthy merchant was, after all, the surest means of conferring life, honour, and riches upon those who shewed themselves desirous, as most men were, of acquiring and adding to their worldly state and reputation; as he supplied them upon credit with materials of every description on which to build their own fortunes, and when his bills became due, also to add to his. For the truth is, that ready money cannot always be paid down in hard coin, there being, according to an old saying, 'less honesty, sense, and money in the world, than people in general imagine.' But when the trader or the usurer, impelled by the wicked instigation of mammon and the devil, would by their accursed devices, vie with each other in obtaining the crown of unrighteousness, made of gold, they are not at all inferior to the lawyer, the physician, or the commander, in the art of depriving people of their

life, their reputation, or their property. There are too many instances occurring every day, more especially among a great trading people, who boast of the superior skill and valour of their mariners, of merchants announcing their failure to the world, for the mere purpose of appropriating the property of others, committing fraudulent acts of bankruptcy, and not unfrequently absconding with the money of their employers in their pockets. It is an old Spanish saying, 'Mercante mal arrivato carta vieja va buscando.' The false trader (I take it,) returns to his old trade; till having at length forfeited his reputation with his honesty, poverty follows in their place.

"Now this same poverty being a sort of foot-cloth for all the world to rub their feet upon, soon becomes so strong and unwholesome, that though it were salted with all the virtues of the earth, it would infallibly smell; insomuch that its very professors, a numerous class, in order to avoid its influence, scruple not to commit the most unjust actions, at the risk of ending their days upon a scaffold. At last, when they find there is really no other means of getting rid of a nuisance, situated not only very near, but actually within their dwellings, they prefer rather to leave their earthly tabernacles altogether, than bear its daily inconvenience; and thus boldly risk a final adventure upon

the sea of eternity. And this is the last argument I can think of to establish my position, that there is not a greater rascal on the face of the earth than a fraudulent merchant, such an one as our good viceroy has probably now in his possession among his other living curiosities.

The treatment of this villanous subject, and the able exposition of its enormities by our ducal orators, were greatly applauded by the rest of the company; yet the viceroy himself was perhaps the loudest in their praise. Turning towards the Prince of Bisignan, "To your highness," he continued, "I believe it next belongs, to give final judgment in this case, from which there must be no appeal, declaring which of the professional parties under consideration, is either the most useful or the most prejudicial to the world. And let their merits, in God's name, come first, for we have heard sufficient of their opposite qualities, I imagine, to serve us for some time." The prince, then, with all due form and ceremony, of which he was an excellent master, commenced his magisterial discourse. "Too grave and weighty I fear is the burden you have imposed upon my poor shoulders, though I shall endeavour to bear up under it as stoutly as I can. And the better to observe your injunctions, I shall here beg to introduce the

famous story, so beautifully told by Boccaccio, applied to one who, like me, had a very important matter in hand.

“ The father of a family once happened to be in possession of a certain extraordinary ring, which being left by will, had the power of conferring his whole property on whichever of his sons had the good fortune to wear it after his death, to the exclusion of the rest of his children. In this way it was handed down through several generations, until it fell to the lot of one, who had three sons, all of whom were acquainted with its excellent properties. Being perpetually teased by each of them for the succession, the old gentleman, to avoid their further importunities, sent for a celebrated goldsmith, whom he commissioned to make two more so exactly similar, that it became impossible to detect the counterfeit. He then severally presented each son with one of them, observing, that if he were wise, and wished to lead a quiet life, he would take care to say nothing about it to his brothers, but that after he was gone, he might act as he thought proper. Then, very conveniently falling sick, as each of them imagined, not long after the presentation of the gift, the old man took leave of the world. The quarrel he had predicted, and which he had contrived to keep at a distance

during his lifetime, now burst forth between the sons, each contending that he was the sole heir, and producing the ring as a testimonial of his claims. Great was their astonishment, and great was likewise the perplexity of the umpire, chosen on the occasion, to adjust the clashing interests of the claimants; the similarity of the rings would now have puzzled the goldsmith himself; insomuch, that after they were well wearied of the controversy, they consented to divide the property into three equal parts. And thus would I do in the very doubtful matter you have proposed to me, for all these professions are so exceedingly useful, that I do not suppose the wisdom of a Solomon could pretend to solve the difficulty, as to which, by its intrinsic excellence, is best entitled to the gratitude of the world:" and here he concluded his remarks.

"You have spoken, prince," exclaimed the viceroy, "in a very satisfactory, and I think a very happy manner. And now let the prince of Salerno please to settle the rest; for if we may be allowed to infer a wise sentence, from the singular prudence and sagacity with which he has conducted all his affairs, we shall not be left in want of one now." "Heaven grant you may not," returned the prince; "were the premises true, the conclusion might be so

likewise, though I shall not take any particular trouble to disclaim the character you have given me, at the expense of stultifying myself, aware as I am of greater imperfections than those which my friend Bignan has attributed to himself. And to avoid, if possible, becoming tedious, I shall follow his example, by repeating a story I recollect to have heard from an old countryman of mine, who having frequent business in Norcia, received it from the lips of one of his relations.

“ There was a certain Annibal Fini da Urbino, no less distinguished by his capacity in civil, than in military affairs, of which, being a liberal-minded man, he had nearly the sole adjustment in Norcia. Finding himself one day less pressed with business than usual, he entered into conversation with several citizens, as he stood in the porch-way of the justice hall, regarding the conduct of the magistrates and governors of Spoleto. Some praised and some blamed them for the same, or opposite qualities; one was too avaricious, another inhuman, and they were all in turn very severely handled in proportion to that love of scandal, which is so universally encouraged in the world.

“ Our friend Annibal, flattering himself that his

known liberality and love of justice had acquired for him the reputation of the most upright judge of Norcia, imagined he should steer clear of the sweeping censure pronounced against the rest of the magistrates, and thus accosted a countryman as he went by: 'Martin, my good fellow, tell me, for the sake of this pretty ducat, which of the magistrates, think you, that has just left the court, has the best character among the people?' Now Martin, who like most of his countrymen, was at once both as awkward and as cunning as a bear, directly replied with the utmost freedom and readiness, but without any thing of the graceful or decorous so much insisted upon by the prince of orators: 'I shall answer you, good Mr. Podestà, as a certain neighbour did a customer who put a very improper kind of question to him. My neighbour happened to be in possession of four beautiful wolf's whelps, one of which a villager had a notion of making his own, and with this view he began to haggle with him for the price, saying, 'May I rely upon your pointing out to me which is the best, for I do not like to trust entirely to my own judgment, though I have a shrewd notion which is the best?' Now the peasant, who well knew the savage disposition of such animals to be very much

upon a par, only answered with a grin: 'Thrust your hand into the pannier, my friend, and please yourself, for they are all of the same kidney.'

"With this he slipped the ducat into his pocket and rode grinning away, leaving the magistrate to digest the spleen and venom of the reply as well as he could. Pretending that he had got business to despatch elsewhere, he turned directly away, and soon afterwards re-entered the hall.

"Now I shall here presume to make a second application of the good rustic's answer to the very important business before us; and I think it may enable us to solve the difficulty regarding the four professional gentlemen at present in the custody of our excellent viceroy, and who, I take it, are pretty much of the same kidney. So thrust your hand into the pannier," he continued, to the viceroy, "and take whichever you like to hang first; for they are all of them such complete proficient in their trade, that not one of them, I am convinced, would yield to the other, either in his desire or his capacity of doing evil. It is in vain for us to attempt to discover which is the worst, as it is altogether a most diabolical affair on the part of each. I fancy the father of lies alone would be enabled to inform us satisfactorily of this truth." There was an universal burst of

laughter and applause at the close of this speech : their mirth was rapturous and overflowing ; nor was their admiration less of the happy manner in which the duke had extricated himself from the difficulty imposed upon him.

The viceroy then finally addressed the company, observing, that each of the guests was now at liberty to entertain what opinion he pleased ; for that this was, after all, the only plan he knew for arriving at the truth. Having said this, he proceeded to close the proceedings ; and not long afterwards, with the most exact observance of all due forms and ceremonies, strictly enforced at the court, the guests separated for the evening, adjourning to repose their wearied limbs from the toils of the banquet, no less than from those of state, of a still more grave and irksome nature than the former.

Novels by Anonymous Authors.

NOVELS

BY ANONYMOUS AUTHORS.

THE following very ingenious novel of Grasso, with two others, by unknown hands, have been in most instances appended to the list of *Novelle Antiche*, for the names of whose authors we are equally at a loss. This last circumstance, however, would appear to have been the sole reason for such arrangement; for the production of the novels now under consideration must be referred to a much later period. Yet how much so, and what is the exact time from which they date their origin, remains still a question with Italian critics, leaving much space for controversy, as well as for arbitrary distinctions. Nearly all, however, agree in yielding among these, the palm of excellence to Grasso, whose delightful confusion and perplexity of mind must be admitted to exceed even the uncertainty of his numerous commentators. "Whether," as is sapiently observed by one of these, "the story is to be esteemed feigned or real, we are at liberty to judge as we please, provided we all agree

in its being extremely entertaining." Many have maintained it to be true, no less from the nature of its incidents, so difficult to conceive, than from its general manner; the ease, elegance, and vivacity of its style, its exquisite tone, and probability of incident and connexion; all of which breathe the odour of a better age than most of its anonymous companions.

To waive every conjecture respecting the precise period in which they may have originated, the translator is not without sufficient authority for the mode of their arrangement. The authors of some of the most esteemed Italian collections, or *Novellieri*, along with the learned Manni, Gualteruzzi, and others, happen to agree in referring them pretty nearly to the same period, and placing them in the same order of chronological succession, as they will be found by the reader to hold in the present work.

GRASSO LEGNAIUOLO;

OR,

THE FAT EBONY CARVER.

ABOUT the year 1409, a company of young Florentines having met one Sunday evening to sup together at the house of their friend, Tommaso de' Pecori, a very good natured and respectable man, and fond of good society, the whole party agreed, as soon as they had supped, to draw their chairs sociably round the fire. There, as is usual on such occasions, they began to converse in a pleasant way upon a variety of topics, when one of the guests looking round him, observed, "What can be the reason that we have not the company of Manetto Ammanotini here to-night? though repeatedly invited, he still refuses to come: it is very strange!" Now Manetto was by profession a carver in ebony, who had opened a shop in the Piazza San Giovanni, and was considered a very skilful artist in his way; he possessed a very agreeable person and manners, and was about five and thirty years of age. Indeed such was his comely and comfortable appearance, that it had acquired for him the name of Grasso,

Fat, and he was everywhere esteemed one of the most happy, good-tempered fellows in the world, always contributing his full share to the life and spirit of a feast. But this time, either from design or caprice, the ingenious carver was wanting to complete the social comfort of the party. After discussing the matter over and over, they were still at a loss to imagine the reason of his absence. As he had sent no message, they felt a little piqued at it; and the person who had first started the subject, said, "I wish we could play him some good trick, were it only to teach him better manners in future." "Yes, but what kind of trick could we play him?" said another; "unless, indeed, we could get him to treat us to a dinner, or something of the kind." Now there was a certain Philip Brunellesco belonging to the same party, a man well acquainted with Grasso and all his concerns, who on hearing this, began to ponder a little on the subject. And pondering to some purpose, he at length observed, like a clever fellow as he was, "If I thought, gentlemen, I were wicked enough to do it, I could tell you how we might have a noble revenge; oh, such a revenge! by passing off a trick upon him that will make us all laugh for an age to come: what do you think? I have not the least doubt we might persuade him that he was actually metamorphosed, and

become quite another person." "Nay, that is impossible!" they all cried at once. "I say not," continued Philip, "if you will only listen, and let me explain the whole plan." And this he did in so satisfactory a manner, that they one and all agreed to join him in persuading Grasso that he was changed into Matteo, a member of the same party.

The ensuing night was accordingly fixed upon for the transformation; when Philip, as being upon the most intimate terms with Grasso, was appointed to go, about the time of shutting up shop, to visit him. So he went; and after talking with Grasso, as had been agreed upon, for some time, there appeared a little lad running in great haste, who inquired if Signor Brunellesco were there? Philip answered, he was, and begged to know what he wanted. "Oh, signor," said the boy, "you must come immediately; for your mother has met with a sad accident, she is very nearly killed, so you must come home now." With well feigned grief and alarm, Philip exclaimed, "Good Lord defend us!" and took leave somewhat abruptly of his friend Grasso, who said he would go with him, if he thought he could be of any service; for now was the time to shew his regard. Somewhat conscience-smitten, Philip thanked him, saying, "No, not now; but if I want you, I will

make bold to send for you." Then pretending to hasten homewards, Philip turned the corner of a street, leading to Grasso's house, opposite to Santa Reparata, and very unceremoniously picking the lock of the door, he marched in, and fastened it behind him, so that no one could follow.

Now it happened that Grasso's mother had set off some days before to a little country place at Pòlerossa, for the purpose of washing linen and such household concerns, and she was expected back again that day. After shutting up his shop, Grasso went sauntering along the Piazza, ruminating on his friend's misfortune; until, finding that it grew late, he concluded that Philip would hardly think of sending for him that night. So he resolved to go home, but was somewhat puzzled, on ascending the steps, to find that he could not open the door as usual; and after several vain attempts, he supposed it must be locked in the inside, and knocking pretty sharply, he shouted, "Open the door!" thinking that his mother had returned, and for some reason or other had fastened it after her in the inside. But at length a voice answered, in Grasso's own tone, "Who is there?" and Grasso, a little startled, said, "It is I; let me in." "No," returned the voice; "and I beg, Matteo, that you will go away: I am in great anxiety

about a friend of mine ; for as I was just now talking in my shop to Philip, there came a messenger in haste to say that his mother was nearly dead, and I am very sorry for him." Philip pretended all the while he said this, to take poor Grasso for his friend Matteo ; and then, as if turning to Grasso's mother, he continued, " Pray, good mother, let me have my supper ; it is really too bad ; you ought to have been back two days since, and you come in just at this time of night,"—and he went on grumbling and scolding exactly in Grasso's own voice. Still more surprised at this, Grasso now said, " That is very like my own voice ; what the deuce can it all mean ? Who is it, speaking there up stairs ? can it be I ? How is it, I wonder ? he says Philip was at his shop when he heard his mother was ill, and now he is busy chiding his mother, or my mother Giovanna, I do not know which. Have I lost my senses, or what does it mean ?" Then he went down the steps again, and shouted up at the windows, when, as had been agreed upon, there passed by his friend Donatello, the sculptor, who said as he went past, " Good night, Matteo, good night ; I am going to call upon your friend Grasso, he is just gone home." Grasso was now perfectly bewildered, on hearing his friend Donatello address him as Matteo ; and turning away, he went

into the Piazza San Giovanni, saying to himself, "I will stay here, till somebody comes by who can tell me who I really am." He was next met by some officers of police, a bailiff, and a creditor, to whom Matteo, whom, however reluctantly, he now represented, owed a sum of money. "This is the man; this is Matteo, take him, he is my debtor, I have watched him closely, and caught him at last!" cried the creditor; and the officers, laying hands on him, led him away. It was in vain that Grasso, turning towards the creditor, exclaimed, "Why, what have you to do with me? you have mistaken your man! my name is Grasso the Carver; I am not Matteo, nor any of his kin: I do not even know him." And he was beginning to lay about him lustily; but they soon secured him, and held him fast. "You not Matteo?" cried his creditor, surveying him from head to foot, "We shall soon see that. Do you think I do not know my own debtor Matteo? Yes, too well. Cannot I distinguish him from Grasso the Carver, think you? You have been in my books too long. I have had accounts against you this year past: yet you have the impudence to tell me you are not Matteo; but will such an alias, think you, pay me my money back? Off with him: we shall soon see whether he be Matteo or not." They then hurried him in no very

gentle way to prison, and it being supper-time, they encountered no one on the road. His name was entered in the gaol-book as Matteo, and he was compelled to take up his station with the rest of the prisoners, all of whom hailed him in the same tone, saying, "Good night, Matteo, good night!" Hearing himself thus addressed, Grasso said, "There must be something in it certainly; what can it mean!" and he almost began to persuade himself, that, as every body said so, he must indeed be Matteo. "Will you come and take some supper with us," said the prisoners, "and put off thinking of your case till to-morrow?" So Grasso supped with them, and took up his quarters along with one of them, who observed, "Now, Matteo, make yourself as comfortable as you can to-night, and to-morrow, if you can pay, well and good; but, if not, you must send home for bed-clothes." Grasso, thanking him, laid himself down to rest, thinking what would become of him, if he were really changed into Matteo; "which I fear," he continued, "must in some way be the case; there are so many proofs of it on all sides. Suppose I send home to my mother; but then if Grasso be really in the house, they will only laugh at me, and perhaps say I am mad. And yet surely I must be Grasso." And with such cogitations he lay perplexing himself

all night, not able to determine which of the two he was. After a sleepless night he arose, and stationed himself at the small grated window, in hopes some one might pass who knew him; and, as chance would have it, Giovanni Rucellai, one of the supper party when the plot was first hatched, approached. It happened that Grasso was making a dressing table for Giovanni, intended for a lady, and the latter had been in his shop the day before, pressing him to finish the work in a few days at farthest. Giovanni, going into a shop facing the prison grate, on the ground-floor where Grasso stood, the prisoner began to smile and make mouths at him; but his friend only stared at him, as if he had never seen him in his life before. Grasso, thinking the other did not know him, said, "Pray, do you happen to know a person of the name of Grasso, who lives at the back of the Piazza San Giovanni, and makes inlaid work?" "Know him! to be sure I do," replied Giovanni, "very well; he is a particular friend of mine, and I am going to him directly about a little job he has in hand for me." "Then," said Grasso, "as you are going, pray be so good as just to say to him, 'A very particular acquaintance of yours, Grasso, has been taken into custody, and would be glad to exchange a word with you!'" "To be sure I will," said the other, "very willingly;" and,

taking his leave, pursued his way. Friend Grasso, remaining at the window of the prison, began to commune with himself, "Well, at last, it is clear that I am no longer Grasso, for I am Matteo, and no one else with a vengeance. The devil give him good of the change; but what a wretched fate is mine! If I say a word about the matter, they will think me mad, and the very beggar lads will laugh at me; and if I fail to explain it, a thousand mistakes will occur, like that of yesterday, when I was arrested for him, so that I am in a most awkward dilemma. Well, I must wait for Grasso's arrival, and see what he says when I explain the affair to him." After anxiously looking out for his arrival, during many hours in vain, he at length retired from his station, to make room for other prisoners who wished to look out. Now it happened that a certain learned judge had that day been committed to prison for debt, who, though unacquainted with Grasso, observing his forlorn situation, and supposing he must be an unhappy debtor, sought to encourage him, saying, "Why, Matteo, you look as melancholy as if you were going to be executed to-morrow, and yet you are only confined for a trifling debt. Come, you ought not to despair; but send for some of your friends or relatives, and try to accommodate matters, so that you may shortly get out, in-

stead of fretting yourself to death." Hearing these consolatory words, Grasso resolved to confide the source of his grievance to so kind an adviser, and, drawing him aside, he said, "Though you do not seem to know me, I am well acquainted with you, signor, and the reputation you have acquired. It is this that emboldens me to entrust you with the source of my unhappiness, lest you should imagine that any small debt could produce the agitation in which you saw me. Alas, it is far worse;" and he then proceeded to relate the whole of his adventure, bitterly lamenting, and entreating of him two things, namely, that he would mention it to no other person, and that he would deign to give him some advice as to the course he ought to pursue, adding, "As I know you to be deeply read in those authors, who treat of ancient histories, and of every kind of strange events; have you ever met with any case similar to this?" The worthy judge, having heard him out, came at once to the conclusion, that the poor man was either insane, or the dupe of some trick, such as it really was. He therefore replied, that he had read of many instances of persons being changed, in this way, and that it was no new thing. "Then," said Grasso, "pray tell me, in case I am become Matteo, who is Matteo now?" The judge replied, "Of course, he

must have become Grasso." The latter rejoined, "Well, I should at least wish to see him, in order to put this matter a little to rights." In this way they continued conversing together, until near the hour of vespers, when Matteo's two brothers made their appearance, and inquired of the prison registrar, whether a brother of their's named Matteo was confined there for debt, and to what amount? This man happening to be a particular friend of Tommaso de' Pecori, had been let into the secret, and answered, that there was; then pretending to run over a list of names, he added the amount of the sum, along with the creditor's name. "Well," said the brothers, "we wish to speak with him instantly, and fix upon some method of payment." So entering into the prison, they inquired of a man, whom they saw standing at the window, whether one Matteo was near at hand, begging him to tell him that two of his brothers were come to ransom him, if he would appear. Soon after Grasso made his appearance at the grate, and having saluted them, the eldest of the brothers said, "Ah, Matteo, and has all the advice we have given you gone for nothing? how often we have warned you what would be the result, plunging every day deeper and deeper into debt, while your extravagance never admits of your paying any one!

What with gambling, and other evil courses, you have never a farthing in the world that you can call your own; and now you reap the fruits of such conduct. Do you think we have not already been involved in sufficient trouble and expense, without adding this to the list of your former follies and extravagancies? Let me tell you, that were it not in consideration of our own honour, and the anxiety of our mother, we would leave you here to pay the penalty of your sins, in order that you might learn better for the future. As it is, we have determined to give you one more trial, and pay the amount; warning you, at the same time, that should you repeat the offence, you shall lie and rot here, before we will trouble ourselves with you more. Be ready, then, when we call for you about vesper time, when there will be fewer people abroad; as it is not very pleasant to be seen here every day in consequence of your scandalous proceedings." To this rebuke, Grasso replied with the utmost humility, promising to abandon the course he had pursued, and no longer bring disgrace upon his friends by his extravagance. He then entreated that they would be true to the hour, which they said they would observe, and took leave of him.

Grasso then went back, and thus addressed the judge, " Well, this is strange indeed! Matteo's bro-

thers have just been here, to inform me they will come and release me in the evening. But," he continued, very much puzzled, "when they take me hence, where shall I go? certainly not to my own house, because if Grasso lives there, what can I say? he will assuredly believe me mad; for I am sure he must be there, or my mother would have sent before this to say that I was missing, whereas she now thinks I am at home." The judge replied, "Then do not go there, but accompany your brothers, (I mean those who called,) wherever they please." Thus conversing, evening at length arrived; the brothers made their appearance, pretending that they had accommodated the affair; the gaoler came forward with the prison keys, and, stepping up to the place, said, "Which of you is Matteo?" Grasso, presenting himself, replied, "I am here." The gaoler, narrowly observing him, said, "Your brothers have settled your debt; so go, you are free;" at the same time opening the prison door, for Grasso and his brothers to pass. Now they resided at Santa Felicita, near the side of San Giorgio, and when they reached home, they took Grasso into a room on the ground-floor, and bade him to stay there quietly till supper time; the table was already covered, and there was a good fire. One of them next went to seek for a priest, residing at Santa

Felicità, a good looking personage, to whom he said that he came to consult him, in confidence, as one neighbour ought to do with another: "You know there are three brothers of us, one of whom is Matteo, who was yesterday arrested for debt. Such is the impression it appears to have made upon him, that he is gone almost beside himself; and more particularly upon one point; for he thinks he has become another person, a carver in ebony, of the name of Grasso, who has a shop at Santa Reparata; and there seems to be no way of getting it out of his head. We have taken him out of prison and brought him home, confining him to his chamber, lest he should proclaim his folly to the world: for should it once become public he will always have the reputation of it, though he were to become the wisest man in the world. This you very well know, and, for the same reason, I am come to entreat that you will consent to accompany me back, and try whether there is any chance of restoring him. Do this, and we shall always consider ourselves greatly indebted to you."

The good priest replied, that he would cheerfully attend him; for he was sure that if he could only engage his brother in conversation, he should hit upon some method of restoring him to reason. So they set out together, and on their arrival, the priest was in-

stantly introduced to our hero, who rose up on his entrance. "Good evening to you, Matteo," said the former. "Good evening, and good year to you also," said Grasso, "who are you looking for?" The priest answered, "I am come to sit with you a little while;" and seating himself, he continued: "Come, sit down by me, Matteo, and I will tell you what I am thinking of. You must know, I have been much concerned to hear that you have been arrested, and have taken the thing so much to heart, as almost to lose your wits. Among other notions, they tell me that you have got it into your head, you are no longer the same Matteo, but are become a certain fellow named Grasso the Carver, who keeps a shop at Santa Reparata. Now if this be so, you are much to blame for permitting such a slight reverse of fortune to affect your mind. I have to entreat you will dismiss these whims altogether from your imagination, and attend to your business like other people. By so doing, you will please your brothers as well as me, besides doing yourself the greatest service in the world; for if you once let people suspect it, they will never give you credit for being in your senses again. Then rouse yourself, be a man, and scorn to indulge such absurdities any longer." Grasso, hearing the kind and encouraging way in which he spoke, de-

clared that he should be glad to obey him as far as lay in his power, being convinced that it was all meant for his good; and that from that hour he would no longer imagine he was any one else but Matteo, as it was clear he was not. There was one thing, however, that he particularly desired, which was, to have an interview with the real Grasso, in order to set his mind quite at rest. "What then," said the priest, "I see it is still running in your head; why do you wish to speak with Grasso? It would only be indulging and proclaiming your folly," and he said so much that the poor man was content to abandon the idea. Then leaving him alone, the priest went to inform the brothers of all that had passed, and shortly taking his leave, he returned to officiate at church.

While the priest had been engaged with our hero, came Philip Brunellesco, bringing with him a certain beverage, which he handed to one of the two brothers, saying, "Take care that you give him this to drink while you are at supper, for it will throw him into so sound a slumber, that you might beat him to a mummy, during six hours, before he would awake. So give it him, and I will return again about five, when we will finish the joke." Accordingly the brothers sat down to sup with our hero, and contrived to make him swallow the whole

of the mixture without his perceiving it. After supper, Grasso turned towards the fire, and the potion very soon began to operate in such a way, that he was no longer able to keep his eyes open; when the brothers, not a little amused, said to him, "Why, Matteo, you are very dull; you are almost asleep!" "True," returned Grasso, "I think I never felt so sleepy in all my life; had I never had a wink of sleep for this month past, I could not feel worse. So pray let me go to bed." And it was with some difficulty he was able to get there, and more especially to undress himself, before he fell into a profound slumber, snoring like a pig. Philip, with three of his companions, then made his appearance, and finding him fast asleep, had him laid upon a litter, with all his clothes, and carried to his own house. No one being within, his mother not having yet returned from the country, they laid him gently upon his bed, and placed every thing exactly in the same order as usual. Next they took the keys of his shop, which they found hanging on a nail in the wall, and going straight to the place, they took all the instruments of his trade they could find, and laid them in different positions. Planes, saws, hammers, rules, and hatchets, all were turned awry, and confused in such sort, as if twenty demons had been puzzling their heads how to pro-

duce so much disorder. Then shutting up the shop again, they restored the keys to the same place, and retired to their own houses to rest. Grasso continued sunk in profound repose the whole night, nor awoke until after matins the next morning. Directly recognizing his old spot at Santa Reparata, he gazed through the window, and endeavoured to collect his confused thoughts. He felt the utmost astonishment at finding himself in his own house, considering where he lay down the preceding evening. "The Lord help me," he exclaimed as he dressed himself, and took down the keys, proceeding with all haste to inspect his shop. "The Lord help me, what a sight is here!" he continued, as he beheld every thing out of its place, and began the Herculean task of re-adjusting his different articles in the manner he had left them. At this moment arrived Matteo's brothers, who finding him thus busily engaged, affected not to know him, one of them saying, "good day, master." Grasso turning round, and recognizing them, began to change colour, replying, "Good day and good year, pray whom are you seeking?" "I will tell you," said the other. "We happen to have a brother whose name is Matteo, who has latterly become a little odd, and got into his head that he is no longer the same Matteo, but the master of this shop, a man

of the name of Grasso. After giving him the best, advice we could, the priest of our parish, a very good kind of person, tried to assist us in eradicating this foolish impression from his mind, and we believed that he was getting better, as he fell into a quiet slumber before we left him. But this morning we found that he had absconded : whither he is fled we know not, and we came here to inquire." Grasso seemed quite confounded at this account, and turning towards them, said, "I know nothing of all this ; why disturb me with your affairs ? Matteo has never been here ; if he said he was I, he was guilty of a falsehood, and if I meet with him I intend to tell him so, and learn whether I am he, or he is I, before we part. We are surely all bedevilled within this day or two ; why come to me with such a story ?" and with this he seized his cloak, and left them in great anger, closing his shop, and proceeding towards Santa Reparata, complaining bitterly the whole way. The brothers also went off, while our hero, stopping at the church, began to walk about in great wrath, until he happened to be joined by one of his companions, formerly his fellow labourer in the same trade of inlaid work, under Maestro Pellegrino, a native of Terma. This youth had for some time been settled in Hungary, and managed his affairs so well, that he had re-

turned to Florence, in order to obtain assistance to execute the numerous commissions he received. Often had he tried to persuade Grasso to accompany him back, by holding out the prospect of his acquiring great wealth; and the moment our hero cast his eyes upon him, he resolved to avail himself of the offer. Hastening towards him, he said, "You have more than once asked me to go with you into Hungary, which I have hitherto refused; but now, from some particular circumstances, as well as a little dispute with my mother, I shall be very happy to return with you. Yet if I am to go, it must be soon, as most probably before to-morrow it might be too late." The young man received this proposal with great joy, and it was arranged that Grasso should immediately proceed to Bologna, where he was to wait for his companion. He accordingly hired a horse, and set out for that city, having first left a letter for his mother, informing her of his departure, and desiring her to take possession of his property in Florence. The undertakings of the two friends in Hungary prospered so well, that they acquired considerable fortunes, and Grasso more than once returned to his native place, and diverted his friends by relating the mysterious adventure of his earlier years.

NOVELLA.

THERE formerly resided in Desiga, a rich district of Provence, a man of considerable wealth, named Rannieri. Being wholly devoted to traffic, like most merchants, he spent a great part of his time in travelling from place to place, and had thus succeeded in realizing by his prudence a fortune, which he daily increased. In other matters, however, he displayed by no means the same discretion; for, though united to a very excellent and lovely woman, he had the weakness to attach himself to one of quite an opposite character, upon whom he bestowed a large portion of his wealth, while at the same time he displayed equal kindness and liberality towards his wife. The latter observing him one day preparing for a journey, and laying aside a variety of articles, intended as presents for his mistress, and being aware at the same time that his simplicity of character was by no means qualified to cope with female arts, requested of him, with a very serious countenance, that he would have the goodness to bring her back a small purse full of sense, which would give him very little trouble, as he was going to the fair of Troyes, and

that even a single pennyworth would be enough. This she said, in the hope of awakening him, by a gentle hint, out of the amorous lethargy in which he lay bound. But he, imagining that she alluded to some species of herb, or medicine, failed to perceive her drift, and contented himself with assuring her that he would fulfil her wishes.

Now as he ventured not to set out without taking leave likewise of his beloved Mabilia, (so the other lady was named,) she on her part entreated him to purchase for her a rich and beautiful mantle, and this also he undertook to do. On his arrival, therefore, he proceeded to despatch his business, in order to attend to the commissions of the ladies, and so successful was he in his speculations, that after realising more than he expected, he purchased a variety of rich presents besides the mantle, and was enabled to expedite his return. As he was on the point of setting out, he recollected the purse of sense, and inquired of one of his old correspondents on change where he was most likely to meet with it. The other being very much of the same leaven as his friend, quite a matter-of-fact man, recommended him, in the same serious tone, to apply at an apothecary's shop, believing it must be some kind of herb or spice brought from the Levant. The

apothecary, with as much simplicity as his customer, assured him that he had none, and referred him to an old Spanish chemist, a little better acquainted with the rare production of which he was in want. Though this tradesman resided at some distance, Ranieri, with a proper regard for his wife's wishes, persevered in his application, and begged to know whether he sold any of this rare article, or had any portion of it to spare. The good man, surprised at this singular demand, began to suspect that there must be some deception in the case, if indeed Ranieri himself did not wish to make a fool of him. "There is mischief here," he said to himself, as he began to question our hero more particularly on the point, until he artfully extracted from him a long account of himself and of his fair, discreet young wife, who had desired him to purchase a little sense, while he learned that articles of a very different kind had been purchased for the other lady. Upon this account, being a sensible, humane man, and seeing how the affair stood, he began to vend him a little of the article he so much wanted, in the shape of some good advice upon the subject. He described in pretty lively colours the folly and injustice of which he had been guilty, in preferring a vile mercenary creature to the gentle affections of

so kind, so judicious, and lovely a wife ; sacrificing her peace and happiness for the sake of a blind and illicit passion for another. . " And if you wish," continued the kind old man, " to experience the truth of all I have said, only consent to put to the trial their respective affection and regard for you, which I sincerely advise all such infatuated men to do, and, you will soon find which of the two will remain most loyal and faithful to your love."

Ranieri, who had listened very attentively to the old gentleman's discourse, without once interrupting him, or testifying the slightest offence, for the first time began to consider the matter seriously, and to feel impressed with the truth of what he had heard. So taking the good sense offered him by the old Spaniard in good part, he professed himself ready to follow his advice, would he only point out in what way he could satisfy himself as to the different degrees of affection entertained by the wife and the mistress ; indeed, nothing would please him better than to put their tempers to the proof. " There can be no difficulty," continued the good Spaniard, " in ascertaining this ; only despoil yourself of your gentlemanly attire, assume a very plain, poor dress, and send before you tidings of your complete downfall in the world ;" (" Heaven forbid !" cried the poor merchant,

horrified at the idea,) "then," continued the old man, smiling, "follow them yourself soon afterwards on foot. In this plight, visit the respective houses of the ladies in question, and I think I may give you permission to take up your residence at that which, of the two, receives you the most kindly and hospitably; but never, if you value your own happiness, visit the other again." Perceiving the kind and judicious nature of this advice, Ranieri promised to obey: he instantly proceeded to the execution of his plan, and instructed his attendants as to all that was necessary for its completion. Setting off alone, he arrived in his poor habiliments, about sunset, in his own district: and apparently overwhelmed with grief and shame, as if he had barely escaped with life, he knocked at the door of his adored Mabilia. It so happened that the lady, being close at hand, came herself to let him in; upon which, in a most alarmed and piteous tone, Ranieri entreated her to grant him an asylum in her house from the rage of his angry creditors, who would not be long in overtaking him. For some time the interested wretch was at a loss to recognize her lover in his poor garb, and stood as if doubtful what to think. At length, beholding him in so destitute a condition, and hearing the fatal tidings of his losses as it were confirmed, she at once

assumed a bold and arrogant tone, inquired who he was, and what he did there, and affected complete ignorance of there being such a person in the world. At the same time she shut the door in his face, and went murmuring away. Such was the sudden shock to the feelings of the poor merchant, that it was with difficulty he restrained his rage: he left the place, heaping upon her all the reproachful epithets that she so well deserved. With sensations it is impossible to describe, he next proceeded towards his own house, whither the report of his ruin had already preceded him: but the moment the door opened, he felt himself encircled in the arms of his wife, who mingling consolations with her tears, conducted him into his room, where she had prepared every thing for his reception likely to alleviate his woes. Such, indeed, was the sweetness and kindness of her manner, that the delight he now felt amply repaid him for the disquiet and pain which the opposite conduct of his mistress had excited in him. Accordingly he found himself, as the good Spaniard had predicted, one of the happiest men in the world, and ever afterwards appreciated, as they deserved, the charms and virtues of his noble consort. Nor did her affection, courage, and devotion stop here; for believing that the whole of her husband's fortune was lost, she gene-

rously brought her private allowance, her jewels, and other ornaments, in order to supply his more immediate wants. For he, desirous of ascertaining the extent of her attachment to him, continued to feign the utmost difficulty, in what way to escape the vengeance of his creditors, and incessantly lamented the bitter fate that awaited him. His noble-minded consort, unable to witness his unhappiness, made over to him, without hesitation, a very considerable fortune, left to her by one of her relations. "Take it, take it all, my dear Ranieri, if it can be of the least service in protecting you from the severity of the law: only let me behold you a little easier and happier in your mind. Let us recollect that fortune comes and goes; that 'riches make themselves wings, and fly away;'" and in this manner she would invite him to take heart, and induce him, by every means in her power, to partake of refreshment and repose. When these however, appeared to fail of their effect, she, for the first time, began to indulge her grief, declaring that she would rather die than witness his continual sorrow and lamentation; and with this she burst into a flood of tears. No longer proof against this last appeal, her delighted husband, soothing and caressing her in the most affectionate manner, acquainted her with the real circumstances of the case, and as-

sured her that he was far more wealthy than he had ever before been. While he was yet speaking, and a crowd of incensed creditors besieged his door, there came tidings of the arrival of waggon loads of goods, with merchandize of every description, purchased with the immense profits he had realized in his last sales ; a sight which, delightful as it was to his creditors, was surpassed by the pure and exquisite pleasure felt by his wife, who saw herself thus unexpectedly restored to affluence, and to the undivided affection and esteem of her repentant husband.

NOVELLA.

DURING the late pestilence, which occurred in the year 1430, having occasion, on account of my own affairs, to stay some time in Florence, it happened that I, one day, met several of my friends at the lodge of the Buondelmonti. Among others were Piero Viniziano, and Giovannozzo Pitti, whom I found complaining of the intense heat of the weather, under the visitation of a fierce July sun, and touching, among other occurrences, upon the recent mortality caused by the plague.

I think it was M. Guccio de' Nobili, who first broke in upon this unpleasant portion of our subject, by observing: "Pray let us leave the dead to bury their dead, and the doctors to their sick, but let us, who are yet sound and hearty, try to keep ourselves so, by being in good humour, and enjoying ourselves as long as we can. If you are wise enough to follow my example, you shall have no reason to complain of the dulness and tediousness of the day: there is nothing equal to a good feast and a good laugh

for keeping away infection!" We all declared upon this, that he should lead the way, and we would abide by his direction; when he immediately rose, declaring we must first seek some place rather more airy, and taking an arm of Pitti, and another of Viniziano, he invited us to follow him as far as Ponte Vecchio. We thence proceeded, in high glee, to the pleasant gardens of the Pitti, where we sheltered ourselves under the embowering arch of vine and jessamine, watered by a fine cool spring, where Giovannozzo provided a table of fruits and wines, of almost every kind, and in the highest perfection. After having partaken of these with no little zest and perseverance, our friend Viniziano, with one of his humorous introductions, commenced the story of Donna Lizetta, whom, as well as her lover, he, being an admirable mimic, took off so completely to the life, that we had some difficulty in preventing ourselves from dying with laughter.

Lioncino was the first to recover himself, and turning towards Piero with a look of mock defiance: "Now is the time come, Piero," he cried, "that our long dispute must be settled. I am resolved to know which of us two is to be esteemed henceforth the best novelist. Our noble friends here shall

decide which must for the future call the other master, when he begins to tell a good story." To this his friend Piero having consented, the challenger smoothed his whiskers, and having swallowed an inspiring glass, he forthwith began: "If I mistake not, you are all pretty well acquainted with a certain Bianco Alfani, the same who is generally known from all other men by the diminutive epithet of lad, resembling one in every point, though he is really above forty years of age. Although he gives himself credit for extraordinary ability, his shrewdness and wit are merely such as are compatible with his boyish appearance, but by no means indicative of the sense and seriousness of forty. Such as he is, however, he was thought equal to the appointment of watching over the safety of debtors, among whom, by redeeming some of the poorer sort, and other means, he realized something handsome.

But being of a sociable disposition, more especially with the ladies, he soon contrived to dissipate the greatest part of it; and you shall hear the very ingenious way in which he disposed of the remainder. He was frequently in the habit last year, of appearing about the new market, where, at a famous eating house, he was proud to entertain a number of young fellows, not quite so simple as himself, who

flocked together, like birds in pairing time, to pick up the best helpmate they could find. Nor was it the least part of their feast to listen to the vain boastings and complacent absurdities uttered by the simple host. Now it happened that a few friends and I came one evening to sup in the same house, where he was entertaining one of his usual parties, and we had the advantage of hearing, through our vicinity to them, the whole of their absurd and humorous discourse. But the worthy host far surpassed the most ridiculous of his guests in the folly of his remarks; and when we had heard quite as much as we wished, my friend Niccolo Tinucci declared, that good as it was, it was, nevertheless, no way to be compared with the still more ridiculous proofs of simplicity he had at other times given. You must know that this eccentric genius, having occasion not long ago to visit Norcia, obtained an introduction to my noble friend, Giovanni di Santi, who resides there; and repeating his visits on somewhat too familiar a footing, as I seldom entered my friend's house, without finding him there before me, Giovanni at length became almost weary of his strange and wild vagaries, which he humoured with infinite skill, to the admiration of all his guests. In order sometimes to get rid of his company, my friend contrived to employ him in some

little commissions ; observing, for instance, " Now pray inquire into that business, my dear Bianco, and let me have an early answer, and you may depend upon it, I will make it worth your while, for I see you are not one of that stamp to remain long quiet without meeting with promotion in the world !"— " And what promotion am I likely to get among you people of Norcia ?" replied our hero, " Do you think I do not know your tricks ?"—" Know what you will," rejoined Giovanni, " but there are some of us who have sworn to leave no stone unturned to have you elected our mayor, the mayor of Norcia ; I think this would not sound amiss, my Bianco ?"—" It would be something to be sure," returned the latter ; " and to say the least of it, I think I could carry the mace as well as you carry that walking stick."—" Very good, Bianco," said my friend, " and we shall soon put you to the proof."—" So much the better ; you may do it now, if you please," cried Bianco, with a very important face, as he hastened to discharge my friend's commission. He had no sooner turned his back, than Giovanni, addressing me with a laugh, " Well, signor, what do you think of him ? Did you ever see a more heavy and conceited ass in your life ? Though you see he gives himself credit for an extraordinary degree of shrewdness, he cannot help be-

lieving he is to become our mayor at the next election : yet he is scarcely fit to be a constable of the borough. Blockhead as he is, however, I will contrive to make him useful to me in my affairs, flattering him with the hope of his mayoralty, while at the same time I amuse myself with his extravagancies."

When the time of his departure from our city arrived, Giovanni, having already made him nearly frantic with expectations of the chief magistracy, escorted him with much mock respect, along with a few other friends, who were in the secret, several miles, as far as Bagno a Ripoli, and there they took a solemn leave of him, bidding him be of good cheer, for that they were resolved to go through with the business, and prove their zeal in his service. Our hero returned thanks with a very complacent and ceremonious air, not in the least questioning the truth of what was said ; and we then measured our way back to the city. The next step proposed was to prepare a letter, as if coming from our friend, Giovanni, inviting him to stand candidate at the ensuing election, when he would infallibly be guilty of a thousand fresh absurdities on the occasion. "There is not the slightest doubt of that," exclaimed Messer Niccolò. "Then the sooner we have them the better," rejoined Messer Antonio, "and my acquaint-

ance with the Norcian dialect will entitle me to the composition of this precious document." In fact, the next morning he produced it ready cut and dry, insomuch that any one would have sworn, from its phraseology, that it could have been written no where but at Norcia. The tenor of it ran thus: "The question of your election to the supreme magistracy would now appear to be placed beyond a doubt, as a certain friend of great influence with the council has recently declared in your favour." This document was regularly copied and signed by a roguish notary, and forthwith despatched to its destination. It was delivered by the messenger into Bianco's hands, with a profusion of compliments and ceremonies, and after repeated perusals, he took the bearer of it courteously by the hand, and invited him in to supper. The messenger then answered all inquiries to our hero's satisfaction, having been well tutored by Giovanni to the task before setting out.

The ensuing day he returned in triumph with the expected answer, which Niccolo read aloud to us with a very business-like air, and much mock solemnity. It was just what we could have wished; he accepted the nomination, returning thanks to the good burghesses for this gratifying proof of their regard. To witness the progress of his extravagance,

we next resolved to send a deputation of gentlemen: to wait upon him at the public prison, where he officiated as a sort of contractor with the poorer debtors, for their ransom, at a certain exorbitant interest. We found him treating with them for terms in a most ludicrous manner, interrupting himself at every other word, with a triumphant assurance that he should shortly be altogether freed from their impertinent solicitations, and obstinate folly. "Away," he cried, "in the course of another month, we shall see whether I am somebody or no." And this was followed by such a medley of similar expressions, that, finding him much worse than we had expected, we agreed that there could be no hazard in advancing boldly to the point. For this purpose we indited a fresh epistle, still in the name of the said Giovanni, and further despatched by the hand of the same courier, containing the actual tidings of his election, and stating that a more formal annunciation of the whole affair would speedily follow. Until that time, it alluded to the propriety of keeping the matter secret, as it ought to be most formally announced both to the public and his familiar friends.

This soon brought a still more glorious answer than before, so complete a specimen, indeed, of the burlesque, that we resolved to put a finish to the

scheme. The mock election took place at the house of Ser Niccolo, the votes were regularly entered, and the great corporation seal attached to the letter, signed by the common-council, announcing the official intelligence of our hero's election. The courier was then commissioned to repair to the new magistrate and request him to hold himself in readiness at Pergola, three miles from Norcia, on the 24th day of July, where he was to wait the arrival of the colours, the dresses, and all the "pomp and circumstance" of election. This duty the courier discharged in the best style possible, for, pulling off his hat, streaming with ribbons, with his face full of happy news, he delivered the great seal with the most reverential air, wishing the new magistrate joy at a humble distance. Having perused it for a full hour, he began to give vent to his overcharged feelings by a thousand ridiculous acts and gestures. He presented the courier with a handsome sum, with the promise of a further reward when he took the magisterial chair at Norcia. He then hastened back to a party with whom he had supped as usual, and bursting upon them, not far from the spot where we stood to enjoy the scene, he exclaimed in a hurried manner, "Well, gentlemen, the time is at length come, when you are to know the extent of

my influence and reputation in the world." "Why, what has happened," inquired his companions, "have you heard any thing new?" "I am inclined to think this is new," returned our hero, displaying the credentials of his election; "if this does not lie, we shall soon see whether I know how to carry a staff of office as well as my predecessors. The truth is, gentlemen, I have just been elected mayor of Norcia;" and this he tried to confirm by a thousand extravagancies, occasioned by the contradictions with which they purposely provoked him. Then, in a violent heat, approaching the place where we stood, he took Ser Niccolo to witness whether our friend Giovanni had not promised, and obtained for him the high situation he alluded to. "Faith, I believe it must be so," cried Ser Niccolo, as he perused the letter, "he only tells you the truth, my good fellows, and if you are wise, you will bestow upon a man of his influence and importance every attention in your power." The whole company then vied with each other in doing honour to him, entreating that they might be admitted as part of his escort, when he should set out to enter on his new office. So our hero departed home to make suitable preparations, and then called on all his acquaintance, with the great seal always in his hand, observing, he came to take leave,

as he was shortly about to enter upon a new career. Great were the doubts and controversies which arose among his friends in Florence on hearing these tidings ; but when they discovered him actually engaged in preparing steeds and colours for his retinue, they almost began to give credit, against the evidence of their better judgment, to the truth of his statements.

Finding that his ready money was scarcely equal to the magnificence of his ideas, our hero turned his thoughts to the sale of some property situated near the church of St. Mark, which a certain notary had long been desirous of purchasing. In order to obtain it on more easy terms, the notary began to flatter him with his splendid preparations and magnificent prospects, observing, that he emulated the noblest of his ancestors ; the house of Alfani having always distinguished itself for its liberality in its public exhibitions and offices. " And since it will be an accommodation to you in your new affairs, I shall be proud to offer you what I once mentioned, though, should any of your other friends be enabled to give you more, you had, perhaps, better not think of my proposal." But our hero immediately jumped at this offer, and forthwith received an order on the bank of Esau Martellini for the amount agreed upon. The

whole of this was speedily employed in completing his outfit on this solemn occasion, having to provide, according to the tenor of his instructions, no less than a judge, a knight, and a notary, to accompany his retinue. Before setting out, applications for minor offices flowed in upon him on all sides, and he made various promises to his friends, how handsomely he would take care to provide for them.

On the appointed day he accordingly set forward, the mock constables and other officers preceding him with their staves, while the cavalcade, with our hero at their head, followed, with colours spread and trumpets sounding as they proceeded slowly and solemnly along. They first took the road towards Arezzo, and from thence to Castiglione, to Cortona, and to Perugia; at all of which places they visited the chief magistrates, to their infinite surprise and perplexity. Doubtful in what way to act, they nevertheless believed it would be the safest plan to shew every proper attention and respect to their countrymen. Leaving Perugia, they next arrived at Pergola, exactly on the 24th day of the month, as had been stipulated for by his friend Giovanni in the credentials. Alighting at the hotel, the host, nearly overwhelmed with the sense of the honour received, lavished abundance of ceremony and respect upon his new guests; but reco-

vering himself a little in the course of the evening, he ventured to inquire, what was the governor's destination, as he doubted not, from the magnificence of his preparations, he must be proceeding upon some high destination. Bianco, happening to overhear this inquiry, instantly answered for himself, that he was about to assume the chief magistracy of Norcia. The good host, upon this, testified the utmost surprise, and shortly again inquired of one of the attendants whether they meant to jest with him? "The chief magistrate of Norcia," he continued, "is a noble Roman gentleman, elected not more than a fortnight ago." "What is that the man mutters there?" exclaimed our hero; "the simpleton is perhaps talking of the governor, for, as matters at present stand, here is the mayor;" and he grew several inches taller in a moment. And in order to avoid further discussion, he commanded the great seal, with his credentials, to be handed to the unbelieving host. With a thousand apologies for his boldness, he returned the document, expressing himself perfectly satisfied of its truth, though he shrugged up his shoulders as he exclaimed, "I almost begin to think I see double; the idea of two magistrates has confused me strangely, and, perhaps, the best way of recovering myself will be to attend to supper." In great glee at having thus dis-

comfited the poor landlord, Bianco, turning round to his officers, observed : " There goes a wise head ! he has drunk till he has confused the distinction in his own mind, between a governor and a lord mayor."

But the inquisitive host, still unsatisfied on the subject, had no sooner served up supper, than, leaving his nephew in charge, he mounted a fine blood mare, and proceeded post to Norcia, where alighting at an old friend's house, not quite sure whether he was out of his wits or no, he exclaimed, in a tone of anxiety, " There has the oddest thing in the world happened to me to-night !" and he proceeded to relate what had occurred. The other, bursting into a loud laugh, inquired whether he had really ridden the whole of the way to learn a fact which he was acquainted with before he set out. " You know as well as I do, you wise-acre, that the mayor was elected the eighth of the month. The man is merely making a fool of you, unless he happens to be a greater fool than yourself." " But how, in the name of all the saints, can that be," retorted the host, " when I read a true account of his election ?" Thus conversing, they walked towards the piazza, where a number of citizens shortly collecting together, they proceeded to pass their opinions on the matter. Great was the perplexity and wonder of all ; and by all he was

advised to refer the affair to the consideration of the council, accompanied by them, as vouchers to the truth of his statement. Fresh embarrassment here arose among the members of the council, and after vainly puzzling their heads to divine the motives of this strange proceeding, they came to the determination of despatching their president to ascertain the meaning of it. The latter, then, accompanied the host back, and still guessing and puzzling themselves the whole way, they arrived in haste at the hotel, and calling for lights, they sent in word to our friend Bianco, that the president of the council of Norcia requested an interview with him. Believing it to be a deputation to welcome him on his approach, our hero ordered him to be ushered in. Having moved to each other with no little ceremony, Bianco, turning round upon the landlord, observed with much self-complacency, "Do you think you can now recollect the time when the new mayor was elected?" "I fear you will begin to doubt as much as myself, signor, very soon," was the good host's reply. The president had some difficulty in restraining his mirth at this novel scene, but trying to put the most serious face upon it he could, he thus proceeded to address our hero: "The members of the city council, hearing of your arrival, signor, have commissioned me to

inform you, that they cannot but testify the utmost surprise at your pretensions to the magistracy of Norcia, the present mayor having been duly elected on the eighth day of this month, to the office he now enjoys. They would willingly, therefore, be made acquainted with the motives of this strange proceeding on your part, for which they can in no way account."

Such was the astonishment of our hero, on hearing these words, that it was with the utmost difficulty he stood the shock, as he inquired, in a scarcely audible voice, whether it was customary to elect two mayors at Norcia? The president replying in the negative, our disappointed friend imagined that he had been solemnly duped by the good people of Norcia, whom alone he believed capable of such a trick; his surprise and grief were suddenly converted into the fiercest anger and impatience; and handing the president the various letters he had received upon the subject, he inveighed bitterly against the council for refusing to sanction his claims, adding, "If these letters do not lie, I shall yet live to be mayor of Norcia. Should it indeed turn out that I have been bubbled either by the people of Norcia, or any other people, I will soon let them know where I come from, and who I am, and they shall pay pretty dearly for

their impertinence ; they shall learn it is no jest, and that the Florentines are a very different class of men from some whom they have to deal with. What, Mr. President, do you take us for mountaineers ? Think you, we shall put up with your skits and insults as they do ? we who have worsted the duke of Milan, to say nothing of others, who have longer claws than the people of Norcia. What will my fellow-citizens say, think you, when they learn that you invited me hither to preside over your councils, and then elected another in my place ? Suppose I had not come early enough, what, in the devil's name, would they have done then ?" The president, beginning to be afraid he might actually become frantic in his presence, attempted various means to pacify him, and proposed to put off the discussion of the case to another time, observing that he would in the mean while acquaint the council with the state of the affair ; and then retreating behind the host, he mounted his horse as quick as possible, and hastened home.

He informed the members that he was not yet enabled to throw much light on the strange business they had in hand, owing to the eccentric language and conduct of the party concerned ; and that it might, perhaps, be the most satisfactory way to summon him before the council. Having resolved to

defer further proceedings for a little while, they learned that our hero was in deep consultation with his mock officers and other waggish friends, in what way to proceed, laying the whole blame on the people of Nercia, who had been instigated by the devil to the infernal act of inviting him to become mayor, and electing another in his place. Wearied with disputation and perplexity, all parties at length retired to rest, though our hero could scarcely close his eyes, for thinking of the dilemma in which he was, or if he slept, he only dreamed sad and vexatious dreams. The next morning he resumed his journey to the seat of magistracy, where crowds of people were collected to witness the novel sight, the arrival of a second mayor. But the procession was somewhat too lugubrious, as our hero's retinue had fallen sadly away, and he proceeded rather like a whipped criminal than a judge, hanging down his head, and looking in every direction but the right one. In this way he alighted at the council hall, announced his arrival, and at the request of the council, entered the audience-room, and took a seat near them. Being called upon to explain his business, he rose up as he had been commissioned to do by the pseudo-judge who accompanied him, and addressed the council as follows: "My lords and gentlemen, it is now

about three months since one of your townsmen, a certain Giovanni di Santi, invited me to become a candidate, and actually secured my election for the chief magistracy of your city. I soon after received intelligence of this event, as you will perceive by these letters under your own hand and seal. Desirous of emulating the example of my ancestors, in filling the most honourable offices, as I have been informed they did, I resolved to take upon myself the burden of duties and honours I imagined you had prepared for me. For this purpose I made the most splendid preparations, according to the usual custom, to enter upon my new dignity in a becoming manner, attended by a retinue which it required many hundred crowns to equip, as you may well imagine. What was my surprise, what my indignation, then, to learn from the master of an hotel the strange news, soon after confirmed by your own president, that you had elected another officer in my place! I am grieved to say, that such a proceeding is scarcely compatible with the honour and fidelity to be expected from a community like yours. Neither is it agreeable to the alliance at present subsisting between the Florentines and your own city; nor have you, as you perhaps think, imposed upon one of plebeian rank: no, gentlemen; you will be shocked,

when I declare that you have attempted to cast a slur upon the fair name of one of the respectable members of the honourable house of Alfani; a house, gentlemen, the most ancient and grand of our whole city; insomuch that you may justly dread the vengeance of heaven, which will not fail to overtake you. Yet, perhaps, if you will be prevailed upon to act a fair and honourable part, to dismiss your present magistrate, and place me in his seat, to heal the wounds my reputation has suffered, and reimburse me for my various expenses, I and my house may probably be induced to bury in oblivion what has already past. Thus, gentlemen, and thus only will you properly consult mine and your own honour; for here I hold the document received from the hands of your deputation: are you prepared to put in force its articles?" Strangely bewildered by this specimen of the mad oratory of our hero, the whole council rose, somewhat anxious for their personal security, while the president proceeded to answer his complaint in the most mild and soothing terms he could select for the purpose: "May it please you, most lofty and flourishing branch of the noble stock, of the very honourable house of Alfani, may it please you to deign to retire for a few moments, while our council proceeds to debate the important question you have just

laid before us." Our hero then retiring, with no little ceremony on both sides, the good common-council men proceeded to examine, with anxious brows, the nature of the documents just submitted to their notice. What was their surprise and mirth at beholding this wretched forgery, a false copy of their own forms and ceremonies of election; but written neither by the hand of their president, nor sealed with their corporate seal. The judge, the knight, the men at arms, were all of the wicked Giovanni's own creation. Upon this the members unanimously declared our poor hero to have been solemnly burlesqued, in the true style of the mock heroic; and having indulged their mirth for some time, and commanded several constables to be in waiting in case of need, they ventured to recal the ex-mayor; to give him his dismissal. On his appearance, the president again addressed him: "Most noble sir, the sitting council has commissioned me to express the deepest concern on discovering the gross imposition which has been practised upon you, in forging the papers which you have here submitted to their perusal. There never, I am sorry to observe, was the least idea entertained of inviting you to take upon yourself the duties of our magistracy, neither are the papers sealed with our seal, nor written in the form of

our elections. Understanding you are sprung from an ancient and noble family, our council sincerely condole with you on the loss either of reputation or of property which you may possibly incur, through the scandalous and unprovoked treatment you have received. We wish it were in our power to prevent your suffering in either, no less out of regard to your own person, than to the city to which you belong. But we are sorry to have to state, that we have not at present a single office vacant, with which we should otherwise be most happy to present you. Under these circumstances we would presume to advise" (for the constables were now at hand) "that you should, as soon as possible, think of returning to your own home; and consulting, as far as possible, your own reputation, which cannot but suffer by prolonging the discussion of this affair, no longer give yourself any uneasiness at what has passed." On hearing the termination of this address, so contrary to his ambitious views, our unhappy hero appeared quite thunderstruck; it was so heavy a blow, that it totally upset the arrogance and extravagance he had formerly shown. "My good lords and gentlemen," he exclaimed, with the tears starting into his eyes, "I begin to fear I have been sadly overreached; and all by that arrant knave and traitor Giovanni di Santi,

as a return for the good services I rendered him in Florence. Behold! I have here letters under his own hand; send for him, pray send for him directly, and first compel him to make me compensation for all my losses, for as to the rest of the injury, I think, with the help of my friends and brothers, he will never be inclined to repeat the joke." "Only convict him of it," replied the president, "and we will take care that he make you most ample reparation, besides giving him such chastisement as shall leave you little trouble in the way of taking revenge." The rogue was accordingly summoned, a crowd of citizens following, inquisitive to learn the new magistrate's fate. When he met his friend Bianco face to face, he testified the greatest surprise, as if he were shocked on beholding him there; and when the cause of his arrest was explained, with a very sharp inquiry into the motives of so shameful an imposition, the prisoner only expressed still greater surprise, observing: "It is true, my lords, that when I was in office at Florence, I received certain favours at the hands of my friend Bianco, here before you; for which feeling truly grateful, I should have been happy to serve him by every means in my power. Something of the kind I also expressed in his presence; adding, that I thought him every way calculated to

adorn so eminent a station as the chief magistracy of Norcia, and that I could have wished I had influence to procure it for him. But from that period to the present, I wish I may lose my head, if I ever heard a single syllable on the subject." Bianco, upon this, immediately confronted him with the letter, saying: "Now, my lords, we shall see with what face he will venture to deny this." Without the least hesitation the prisoner denied its being his production, and bringing a host of noble witnesses to back his assertions, the council, however reluctantly, was compelled to set him free. The sole remuneration our poor hero obtained, was the expenses of his procession, which, out of pure compassion, the council at length consented to discharge.

He then walked out of the hall, accompanied by his false friend, Giovanni, attracting the admiration and curiosity of the people, wherever he passed. The wicked author of the plot had the dexterity further to impose upon him, condoling with him on the very unlucky occurrence, and expressing his desire of punishing the perpetrators of so vile a forgery, who presumed to make use of his name, in order to ruin him with his best friend. On reaching the inn, then, our hero took a hearty leave of his best friend, and journeyed on his way towards Perugia, followed by

the sham judge, the knight, and the notary, all of whom had been hired for the occasion. Not having yet received the due reward for their occupation of such dignified stations, and aware that the enterprise had miscarried, they began to murmur, and unable to obtain satisfaction, they resolved, without further ceremony, by the advice of the notary, to make seizure of the ex-mayor's effects, the remnants of his splendid preparations for the procession. At his next stage, steeds, trunks, and trappings were laid under sequestration, by virtue of a pretended writ which the false notary served upon our unfortunate hero, in spite of his earnest prayers and entreaties to retain them, that he might re-enter his native city as honourably attended as he possibly could. The sole property left him was his coat of arms, his banner, and his lance, which he carried on his shoulders to Arezzo.

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